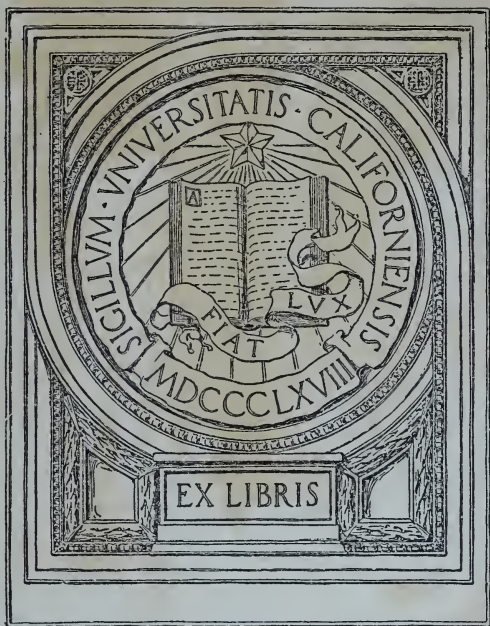




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THE PIONEER:

OR,

CALIFORNIA MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

EDITED BY F. C. EWER.

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CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER TWELFTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, January 27, 1852.

I WISH that it were possible, dear M., to give you an idea of the perfect Saturnalia, which has been held upon the river for the last three weeks, without at the same time causing you to think *too* severely of our good Mountains. In truth, it requires not only a large intellect, but a large heart, to judge with becoming charity of the peculiar temptations of riches. A more generous, hospitable, intelligent and industrious people, than the inhabitants of the half-dozen Bars—of which Rich Bar is the nucleus—never existed; for you know how proverbially wearing it is to the nerves of manhood, to be entirely without either occupation or amusement; and that has been pre-eminently the case during the present month.

Imagine a company of enterprising and excitable young men, settled upon a sandy level, about as large as a poor widow's potatoe patch, walled in by sky-kissing hills—absolutely *compelled* to remain, on account of the weather, which has vetoed indefinitely their Exodus—with no place to ride or drive, even if they had the necessary vehicles and quadrupeds,—with no newspapers nor politics to interest them,—deprived of all books but a few dog-eared novels of the poorest class,—churches, lectures, lyceums, theaters and (most unkindest cut of all!) pretty girls, having become to these unhappy men mere myths,—without *one* of the thousand ways of passing time peculiar to civilization,—most of them living in damp, gloomy cabins, where Heaven's dear light can enter only by the door,—and, when you add to all these disagreeables the fact that, during the never-to-be-forgotten month, the most remorseless, persevering rain which ever set itself to work to drive humanity mad, has been pouring doggedly down, sweeping away bridges, lying in uncomfortable puddles about nearly all the habitations, wickedly insinuating itself beneath un-umbrella-protected shirt-collars, generously treating to a shower-bath *and* the rheumatism sleeping bipeds, who did not happen to have an India-rubber blanket,—and, to crown all, rendering mining utterly impossible,—you cannot wonder that even the most moral should have become somewhat reckless.

The Saturnalia commenced on Christmas evening, at the Humboldt, which on that very day, had passed into the hands of new proprietors. The most gorgeous preparations were made for celebrating the *two* events. The bar was re-trimmed with red calico, the bowling alley had a new lining of the coarsest and whitest cotton cloth, and the broken lampshades were replaced by whole ones. All day long, patient mules could be seen descending the hill, bending beneath casks of brandy and baskets of champagne, and, for the first time in the history of that cele-

brated building, the floor (wonderful to relate, it *has* a floor,) was *washed*, at a lavish expenditure of some fifty pails of water, the using up of one entire broom, and the melting away of sundry bars of the best yellow soap; after which, I am told that the enterprising and benevolent individuals, who had undertaken the Hereulean task, succeeded in washing the boards through the hopeless load of dirt, which had accumulated upon them during the summer and autumn. All these interesting particulars were communicated to me by "Ned," when he brought up dinner. That distinguished individual himself was in his element, and in a most intense state of perspiration and excitement at the same time.

About dark, we were startled by the loudest hurras, which arose at the sight of an army of India-rubber coats, (the rain was falling in riversfull,) each one enshrouding a Rich Barian, which was rapidly descending the hill. This troop was headed by the "General," who—lucky man that he is—waved on high, instead of a banner, a *live* lantern, actually composed of tin and window-glass, and evidently intended by its maker to act in no capacity but that of a lantern! The "General" is the largest and tallest and—with one exception, I think—the oldest man upon the river. He is about fifty, I should fancy, and wears a snow-white beard of such immense dimensions, in both length and thickness, that any elderly Turk would expire with envy, at the mere sight of it. Don't imagine that *he* is a reveler; by no means; the gay crowd followed *him*, for the same reason that the king followed Madame Blaize, "because he went before."

At nine o'clock in the evening, they had an oyster and champagne supper in the Humboldt, which was very gay with toasts, songs, speeches, etc. I believe that the company danced all night; at any rate, they were dancing when I went to sleep, and they were dancing when I woke the next morning. The revel was kept up in this mad way for three days, growing wilder every hour. Some never slept at all during that time. On the fourth day, they got past dancing, and, lying in drunken heaps about the bar-room, commenced a most unearthly howling;—some barked like dogs, some roared like bulls, and others hissed like serpents and geese. Many were too far gone to imitate anything but their own animalized selves. The scene, from the description I have had of it, must have been a complete illustration of the fable of Circe and her fearful transformations. Some of these bacchanals were among the most respectable and respected men upon the river. Many of them had resided here for more than a year, and had never been seen intoxicated before. It seemed as if they were seized with a reckless mania for pouring down liquor, which, as I said above, everything conspired to foster and increase.

Of course, there were some who kept themselves aloof from these excesses; but they were few, and were not allowed to enjoy their sobriety in peace. The revelers formed themselves into a mock vigilance committee, and when one of these unfortunates appeared outside, a constable, followed by those who were able to keep their legs, brought him before the Court, where he was tried on some amusing charge, and

invariably sentenced to "treat the crowd." The prisoners had generally the good sense to submit cheerfully to their fate.

Towards the latter part of the week, people were compelled to be a little more quiet from sheer exhaustion; but on New Year's day, when there was a grand dinner at Rich Bar, the excitement broke out, if possible, worse than ever. The same scenes in a more or less aggravated form, in proportion as the strength of the actors held out, were repeated at Smith's Bar and "The Junction."

Nearly every day, I was dreadfully frightened, by seeing a boat-load of intoxicated men fall into the river, where nothing but the fact of their *being* intoxicated, saved many of them from drowning. One morning, about thirty dollars worth of bread, (it must have been "tipsy cake,") which the baker was conveying to Smith's Bar, fell overboard, and sailed merrily away towards Marysville. People passed the river in a boat, which was managed by a pulley and a rope, that was strained across it from Indian Bar to the opposite shore.

Of the many acquaintances, who had been in the habit of calling nearly every evening three, only, appeared in the cabin during as many weeks. Now, however, the Saturnalia is about over. "Ned" and "Choch," have nearly fiddled themselves into their respective graves,—the claret (a favorite wine with miners,) and oysters are exhausted,—branded fruits are rarely seen, and even port wine is beginning to look scarce. Old callers occasionally drop in, looking dreadfully sheepish and subdued, and *so* sorry,—and people are evidently arousing themselves from the bacchanal madness, into which they were so suddenly and so strangely drawn.

With the exception of my last, this is the most unpleasant letter which I have ever felt it my duty to write to you. Perhaps you will wonder that I should touch upon such a disagreeable subject at all. But I am bound, Molly, by my promise, to give you a *true* picture (as much as in me lies,) of mining life and its peculiar temptations, "nothing extenuating nor setting down aught in malice." But with all their failings, believe me, the miners, as a class, possess many truly admirable characteristics.

I have had rather a stupid time during the storm. We had been in the habit of taking frequent rows upon the river in a funny little toppling canoe, carved out of a log. The bridge at one end of our boating ground and the rapids at the other, made quite a pretty lake. To be sure it was so small that we generally passed and repassed its beautiful surface at least thirty times in an hour. But we did not mind *that*, I can assure you. We were only *too* glad to be able to go onto the water at all. I used to return, loaded down with the magnificent large leaves of some aquatic plant, which the gentle frosts had painted with the most gorgeous colors, lots of fragrant mint, and a few wan, white flowers, which had lingered past their autumnal glory. The richest hot-house bouquet could never give me half the pleasure, which I took in arranging in a pretty vase of purple and white, those gorgeous leaves. They made me think of Moorish Arabesques; so quaint and *bizarre*, and at the same time dazzlingly brilliant were the varied tints. They were in their glory at evening; for like an oriental

beauty, they *lighted up* splendidly. Alas! where one little month ago, my pretty lake lay laughing up at the stars, a turbid torrent rushes noisily by;—the poor little canoe was swept away with the bridge, and splendid leaves hide their bright heads forever beneath the dark waters.

But I am not entirely bereft of the beautiful. From my last walk, I brought home a tiny bit of *out-doors*, which through all the long, rainy months that are to come, will sing to me silently, yet eloquently, of the blue and gold of the vanished summer, and the crimson and purple of its autumn. It is a branch, gathered from that prettiest feature of mountain scenery, a moss-grown fir-tree. You will see them at every step, standing all lovely in this graceful robe. It is in color, a vivid pea-green, with little hard flowers, which look more like dots than anything else, and contrast beautifully with the deeper verdure of the fir. The branch, which I brought home, I have placed above my window. It is three feet in length and as large round as a person's arm; and there it remains, a cornice wreathed with purple-starred tapestry, whose wondrous beauty no upholsterer can ever match.

I have got the prettiest New Year's present. You will never guess what it is, so I shall have to tell you. On the eve of the year, as the "General" was lifting a glass of water, which had just been brought from the river, to his lips, he was startled at the sight of a tiny fish. He immediately put it into a glass jar and gave it to me. It is that most lovely of all the creatures of Thetis, a spotted trout, a little more than two inches in length. Its back of mingled green and gold, is splashed with dots of the richest sable. A mark of a dark ruby color, in shape like an anchor, crowns its elegant little head. Nothing can be prettier than the delicate wings of pale purple, with which its snowy belly is faintly penciled. Its jet black eyes, rimmed with silver, within a circlet of rare sea-blue, gleam like diamonds, and its whole graceful shape is gilded with a shimmering sheen, infinitely lovely. When I watch it from across the room, as it glides slowly round its crystal palace, it reminds me of a beam of many-colored light; but when it glides up and down in its gay playfulness, it gleams through the liquid atmosphere like a box of shining silver. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;" and, truly, I never weary watching the perfected loveliness of my graceful little captive.

In the list of my deprivations, above written, I forgot to mention a fact, which I know will gain me the sympathy of all carniverously disposed people. It is, that we have had no *fresh meat* for nearly a month! Dark and ominous rumors are also floating through the moist air, to the effect that the potatoes and onions are about to give out! But don't be alarmed, dear Molly. There is no danger of a famine. For have we not got wagon loads of hard, dark hams, whose indurated hearts nothing but the sharpest knife and the stoutest arm can penetrate? Have we not got quintals of dreadful mackerel, fearfully crystallized in black salt? Have we not barrels upon barrels of rusty pork; and flour enough to victual a large army for the next two years? Yea, verily, have we; and more also. For we have oysters in cans, pre-

served meats and sardines, (*appropo*, I *detest* them) by the hundred box full.

So hush the trembling of that tender little heart and shut those tearful and alarmed eyes, while I press a good-night kiss on their drooping lids.

"THESE BE THY GODS, O ISRAEL!"

BY LUOF.

IMMORTAL GOLD! I worship at thy shrine!
I sing thy praise, Thou source of Life and Light!
Thy faithful worshippers have rights divine;
They quaff the pure elixir of delight,
In draughts more rich and deep than starry night.
For them stern Winter softens into Spring,
And Summer's sunbeams mellow on their sight;
All climes, all seasons their first offerings bring
To thine elect, oh Gold! Our Saviour and our King!

Hail, Mighty Dollar! Belgie claims thy name:
Thou hast no ties of country,—none of creed;
Thou art the favorite harbinger of fame;
The good Samaritan in time of need;
The counselor of loving hearts that bleed:
Thou art the most substantial earthly friend;
The counselor, our every cause to plead;
With zeal sustain the right,—the wrong defend,
For in thy name the power of Gold and Silver blend.

Thou art the magic ring where extremes meet:
The princely hall, the cottage of the poor;
The trembling culprit and the judgment seat;
The devotee,—the God he doth adore.
Thou dost unlock the cherub-guarded door
Of that mysterious Eden, woman's heart,
And read with ease its hieroglyphic lore;
To it, Love's warm and gushing tides impart
Alike for youth and age, vice, virtue, nature, art.

Thy touch regenerates decrepid age;
Transforms to angels, maidens five times ten;
Changeth the clownish dolt into a sage;
With vestal bloom adorns the courtesan;
Transfigureth to saints unholy men.
Full many a sermon hath thy sheen inspired;
Full many a tome hath drawn from Genius' pen:
Full many a hero with dread thunder fired;
Full many a conquest won when courage had expired.

Great civilizer of Mankind! All hail!
Ark, Crescent, Cross, alike proclaim *Thee Great!*
Thy golden counsels evermore prevail
"In all the chief affairs of Church and State;"
Of conscience, Thou, "the measure and the weight:"
Alpha and Omega of created things!
Thou art the mighty Arbiter of Fate!
Thine orb sustains the thrones of mightiest kings,
And proud Republics bask beneath thy silver wings.

Rock of Eternal Ages! May we rest
Beneath thy shadow, through Life's pilgrimage!
Nor heed the storms which rend Earth's rugged breast;
Dream more serenely as Time's tempests rage;
To pleasure's tournaments our powers engage:
From thine auriferous clefts, divinely flow
The grace and beauty of the golden age,
Our souls melt in the rosy flood below
And on Love's blooming Ocean rise with immortal glow!

Oh, may our children's children, blessed Gold!
 Luxuriate in thine inspiring beams;
 Thy *sovereign* smiles their budding hopes unfold;
 Thine *eagles* waft where joy and glory gleam;
 Thine *unions* realize their fondest dreams;
 May savage tribes thy grace appreciate;
 Thy praise ascend from mountains, plains and streams;
 Thine altars blaze in every Age and State,
 And millions throng each shrine with the high impulse of Fate.

Oh, let us ever worship at thy shrine!
 Let us discard the false philosophy
 Of Moses and the Prophets! With Aaron join,
 Free from all sanctimonious bigotry,
 To worship Gold,—the only Deity
 Worthy the aspirations of a soul
 Panting for blissful immortality!
 Gold is the God of man! From pole to pole,
 Let the bold anthem on through endless ages roll!

THE SOUL UNTO HERSELF.

—
 BY F. C. EWER.
 —

Bereft?—Ah, when the forms of thy beloved
 Ones vanish in the thick of life,
 Stretch not thine arms forth after them,—
 For here, is strife.
 Press ever onward;—leave the past to die;—
 Work out thy work with steadfast brow,
 And let the mighty, headlong world
 Its strango course flow.
 For friends are sunshine,—they but help thee grow;
 And when their work is done, they leave:
 To other duties they must go,—
 Why for them grieve!
 Aye,—should pale Memory at thy side gaze back
 To vanished scenes—neglectful friends,—
 Look where she looks,—then upward soar
 To thy high ends.
 The past is gone:—the Future opens wide,
 Plastic and grand! Then onward move
 And mould it to thy will; and thou
 Shalt have hand to thy hand, and love for love.

FAITH.

—
 BY R. W. F.
 —

FAITH is the hand that brings the spirit nigh
 The shadowed things of far futurity;—
 The vision of the soul invisible,
 Piercing the mists, the mental gaze that veil;—
 The bark that beareth sure to safety's haven.
 The spirit to thought's restless ocean given;
 The spider, cast by fate on tiny isle,
 Gives to the breeze his silken thread the while,
 And reaches banks where flowers in beauty smile;
 So gulfs impassable are often seen
 'Twixt soul and action :—Faith the bridge between,
 That gives the mind the freedom to explore
 The things of joy, that lie in shade before.

hair streaming in the wind—the blood flowing down his face—gazed eagerly into the driving mist that went scudding down the stream.

“Made a short trip of it, messmates,” said a hoarse voice behind. It was the seaman who had hailed us on our first coming ashore. Seabrook started. “I wanted you,” he said; “Frank, come here,” and he drew me and the sailor into a low drinking-house on the wharf, from which the latter had probably just emerged. “Frank,” he said, when we were under cover, “here we part. Don’t speak—its useless. I have one thing more to ask, which you will, I know you will, attend to. Find out my poor wife—take her to my father; tell him it is my last request that the wife of my bosom, my first and only love, should never come to want. I know you will do this—and if a man so guilty and desperate as I am, may ask a blessing for any one—may God forever bless you. Farewell!”

He wrung my hand, and I was alone in the house. I could not speak—scarcely see—but on hurrying out to the brink of the river, I heard above the dying storm the plashing of oars, and caught a glimpse of the boat that bore him away. Some three hours later, by the gray light of a waning, clouded moon, I saw the ship he had joined dropping down the stream, and I half-fancied I could trace through the gloom his mournful but noble features, yet wet with blood, looking to the city, where he had hoped to find welcome and delight, but where he had found disgrace and left disaster and violence.

My mind ran back through the spent storm, through the terrible fight, through the bitter interview with his parents, and rested with awe on his gloomy but too prophetic words—“If I were at odds with life and fortune now, I would ask nothing better than to ship on board some such desperate thing as that, and dash out into the ocean under the very shadow of tempest and destruction.”

L I F E .

—
BY G.
—

ALL Nature beats with an eternal pulse
In ev’ry altitude, in ev’ry clime,
Ages on ages roll, and still it throbs
Strong and unwearied by the lapse of time.

Mysterious Life! antagonist of death,
Conquered and conquering; in thy onward course
Thou dost not pause, but with man’s latest breath,
Leap’st with his spirit in resistless force.

The withered grass, the fetid sepulcher,
The moldering carcass, and decaying tree,
Increase thy volume and extend thy power,
In slow and solemn strides, eternally.

Almighty God, who art of Life the source,
And from whom Life perpetually springs,
Teach us to know more fully of this force
Which penetrates and vivifies all things,

That we may learn from e’en the lowliest plant
Which on thy footstool rears its tiny head,
That all the glory’s thine, and Life, and Death,
But humble agents, acting in thy stead.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER THIRTEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, February 27, 1852.

You will find this missive, dear M., a journal, rather than a letter ; for the few insignificant events, which have taken place since I last wrote to you, will require but three lines apiece for their recital. But stop ; when I say insignificant, I forget one all-important misfortune, which, for our sins I suppose, has befallen us, in the sudden departure of our sable Paganini.

Yes ; Vattal Ned to the valley hath gone,
In a Marysville kitchen you'll find him ;
Two rusty pistols he girded on,
And his violin hung behind him.

His fiddle is heard no more on all the Bar, and silence reigns through the calico halls of the Humboldt. His bland smile and his dainty plats, his inimitably choice language and his pet tambourine, his woolly corkscrew and his really beautiful music, have I fear vanished forever from the mountains.

Just before he left, he found a birth-day, which belonged to himself ; and was observed all the morning thereof, standing about in spots, a perfect picture of perplexity painted in burnt umber. Inquiry being made by sympathizing friends as to the cause of his distress, he answered, "that having no fresh meat, he could not prepare a dinner for the log-cabin, worthy of the occasion !"

But no circumstance can put a man of genius entirely *hors du combat*. Confine him in a dungeon, banish him to an uninhabited island, place him solitary and alone in a boundless desert, deprive him of all but life, and he will still achieve wonders. With the iron hams, the piscatory phenomena referred to in my last, and a can of really excellent oysters, Ned's birth-day dinner was a *chef d'œuvre*. He accompanied it with a present of a bottle of very good Champagne, requesting us to drink it (which we *did*, not having the fear of temperance societies, or Maine law liquor bills before our eyes,) in honor of his having dropped another year into the returnless past.

There has been a great excitement here, on account of the fancied discovery of valuable quartz mines, in the vicinity of the American Rancho, which is situated about twenty miles from this place. Half the people upon the river went out there, for the purpose of "prospecting" and "staking claims." The quartz apparently paid admirably ; several companies were speedily formed, and men sent to Hamilton, the county seat, to record the various claims. F. himself went out there, and remained several days. Now, however, the whole excitement has turned out to be a complete humbug. The quicksilver which was pro-

cured at the Rancho, for the testing of the quartz, the victims declare was "salted," and they accuse the *Rancheros* of conniving at the fraud, for the purpose of making money out of those who were compelled to lodge and board with them while "prospecting." The accused affirm, that if there was any deception (which, however, is beyond the shadow of a doubt) they, also, were deceived; and as they appear like honest men enough, I am inclined to believe them.

Just now, there is a new quartz mine excitement. A man has engaged to lead a company to the golden and crystalized spot. Probably this, also, will prove like the other, a mere yellow bubble. But even if as rich as he says, it will be of little value at present, on account of the want of suitable machinery; that, now in use, being so expensive, and wasting so much of the precious metal, that it leaves the miner but little profit. It is thought, however, by men of judgment, that in a few years, when the proper way of working them to advantage has been discovered, the quartz mines will be more profitable than any others in California.

A few days ago, we had another specimen of illegal, but in this case, at least, extremely equitable justice. Five men left the river without paying their debts. A meeting of the miners was convened, and "Yank," who possesses an iron frame, the perseverance of a bulldog, and a constitution which never knew fatigue, was appointed, with another person, to go in search of the culprits, and bring them back to Indian Bar. He found them a few miles from this place, and returned with them in triumph and alone—his friend having been compelled to remain behind, on account of excessive fatigue. The self-constituted court, after a fair trial, obliged the five men to settle all liabilities before they again left the river.

Last week, the Frenchmen on the river celebrated the revolution of Feb. 1848. What kind of a time they had during the day I know not; but in the evening (*apropos*, part of them reside at Missouri Bar) they formed a torchlight procession, and marched to Rich Bar, which, by the way, takes airs upon itself, and considers itself as a *Town*. They made quite a picturesque appearance as they wound up the hill, each one carrying a tiny pine tree, the top of which was encircled with a diadem of flame, beautifully lighting up the darker verdure beneath, and gleaming like a spectral crown through the moonless, misty evening. We could not help laughing at their watchwords. They ran in this wise; "Shorge Washington, James K. Polk, Napoleon Bonaparte! Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité! Andrew Jackson, President Filmore and Lafayette!" I give them to you, word for word, as I took them down at the time.

Since the bridges have been swept away, I have been to Rich Bar but once. It is necessary to go over the hill now, and the walk is a very wearisome one. It is much more pleasant to live on the hills, than on the Bar, and during our walk we passed two or three cosy little cabins, nestling in broad patches of sunlight, and surrounded with ample space for a promenade, which made me quite envious. Unfortunately, F.'s profession renders it desirable that he should reside where the largest number of people congregate, and then the ascent to the

habitable portion of the hill is as steep as any part of that leading into Rich Bar, and it would be impossible for him to walk up and down it several times a day, a task which he would be compelled to perform if we resided there. For that reason I make myself as happy as possible where I am.

I have been invited to dine at the best built log cabin on the river. It is situated on the hill of which I have just been writing, and is owned by five or six intelligent, hard-working, sturdy young men. Of course, it has no floor, but it boasts a perfect marvel of a fireplace. They never pretend to split the wood for it, but merely fall a giant fir tree, strip it of its branches, and cut it into pieces the length of the aforesaid wonder. This cabin is lighted in a manner truly ingenious. Three feet in length of a log on one side of the room is removed and glass jars inserted in its place; the space around the necks of said jars being filled in with clay. This novel idea is really an excellent substitute for window glass. You will, perhaps, wonder where they procure enough of the material for such a purpose. They are brought here in enormous quantities containing brandied fruits; for there is no possible luxury connected with drinking, which is procurable in California, that cannot be found in the mines; and the very men, who fancy it a piece of wicked extravagance to *buy* bread, because they can save a few dimes by *making* it themselves, are often those who think nothing of spending from fifteen to twenty dollars a night in the bar-rooms. There is at this moment, a perfect Pelion upon Ossa-like pile of beautiful glass jars, porter, ale, Champagne and claret bottles lying in front of my window. The latter are a very convenient article for the manufacture of the most enchantingly primitive lanterns. Any one in want of a utensil of this kind has but to step to his cabin door, take up a claret or Champagne bottle, knock off the bottom, and dropping into the neck thereof, through the opening thus made, a candle, to have a most excellent lantern. And the beauty of it is, that every time you wish to use such a thing, you can have a *new* one.

But to return to my description of the cabin. It consists of one very large room, in the back part of which are neatly stored several hundred sacks of flour, a large quantity of potatoes, sundry kegs of butter, and plenty of hams and mackerel. The furniture consists of substantial wooden stools, and in these I observed that our friends followed the fashion—no two of them being made alike. Some stood proudly forth in all the grandeur of four legs, others affected the classic grace of the ancient tripod, while a few, shrank bashfully into corners on one stubbed stump. Some round, some square, and some triangular in form; several were so high that when enthroned upon them, the ends of my toes just touched the ground, and others were so low, that on rising I carried away a large portion of the soil upon my unfortunate skirts. Their bunks, as they call them, were arranged in two rows along one side of the cabin, each neatly covered with a dark blue or red blanket. A handsome oil cloth was spread upon the table, and the service consisted of tin plates, a pretty set of stone China cups and saucers, and some good knives and forks, which looked almost as bright as if they had just come from the cutlers. For dinner, we had

boiled beef and ham, broiled mackerel, potatoes, splendid new bread, made by one of the gentlemen of the house, coffee, milk, (Mr. B. has bought a cow, and now and then we get a wee-drop of milk,) and the most delicious Indian meal parched that I ever tasted. I have been very particular in describing this cabin, for it is the best built, and by far the best appointed one upon the river.

I have said nothing about candlesticks as yet, I must confess that in *them*, the spice of life is carried almost too far. One gets satiated with their wonderful variety. I will mention but too or three of these make-shifts. Bottles, *without* the bottoms knocked off, are general favorites. Many, however, exhibit an insane admiration for match boxes, which, considering that they *will* keep falling *all* the time, and leaving the entire house in darkness, and scattering spermaceti in every direction, is rather an inconvenient taste. Some fancy blocks of wood, with an ornamental balustrade of three nails, and I *have* seen praiseworthy candles making desperate efforts to stand straight in tumblers! Many of our friends, with a beautiful and sublime faith in spermaceti and good luck, eschew everything of the kind, and you will often find their tables picturesquely covered with splashes of the former article, elegantly ornamented with little strips of black wick.

The sad forbodings mentioned in a former letter have come to pass. For some weeks, with the exceptions of two or three families, every one upon the river has been out of butter, onions and potatoes. Our kind friends upon the hill, who have a little remaining, sent me a few pounds of the former the other day. Ham, mackerel and bread, with occasionally a treat of the precious butter, has been literally our only food for a long time. The Rancheros have not driven in any beef for several weeks; and although it is so pleasant on the Bars, the cold on the mountains still continues so intense that the trail remained impassable to mules.

The weather here, for the past five weeks, has been like the Indian summer at home. Nearly every day I take a walk up on to the hill back of our cabin; nobody lives there, it is so very steep. I have a cosy little seat in the fragrant bosom of some evergreen shrubs where often I remain for hours. It is almost like death to mount to my favorite spot, the path is so steep and stony, but it is new life when I arrive there, to sit in the shadow of the pines, and listen to the plaintive wail of the wind as it surges through their musical leaves, and to gaze down upon the tented Bar lying in somber gloom,—for as yet the sun does not shine upon it,—and the foam-flaked river, and around at the awful mountain, splashed here and there with broad patches of snow, or reverently upward into the stainless blue of our unmatched sky.

This letter is much longer than I thought it would be when I commenced it, and I believe that I have been as minutely particular as ever you can desire. I have mentioned everything that has happened since I last wrote. O! I was very near forgetting a present of two ring doves, (alas! they had been shot) and a blue jay which I received yesterday. We had them roasted for dinner last evening. The former were very beautiful, approaching in hue more nearly to a French gray,

than what is generally called a dun color, with a perfect ring of ivory encircling each pretty neck. The blue jay was exactly like its namesake in the States.

Good-bye, my dear M., and remember, that the *same* sky, though not quite so beautiful a portion of it, which smiles upon *me* in sunny California, bends lovingly over *you* in cold, dreary, but in spite of its harsh airs, beloved New England.

INVOCATION AT MIDNIGHT.

A LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS DURING ABSENCE.

BY EDWARD POLLOCK.

COME dearest sunlike mingle with my dreams,
Come from the East, thou fairer than the morn;
On me thy shadowy smiles shall shine like beams
Poured down at dawn on blossoms newly born.
The sun will soon be jewelizing the corn
Around thy dwelling—ere he wake the night,
Haste—haste in spirit to these arms forlorn,
Ere day divide us, meet my sleeping sight,
And thrill my heart anew with dreams of old delight.

The sea is near thee in thine East countrie,
The sea is near me on this Western shore,
O, could we both now rove by either sea,
As once we wandered—when the wild waves' roar
Was music to us! O to be once more
Where thou hast being, and to taste the bliss,
That earliest warmed my bosom to its core;
Once more thy hand to press, thy cheek to kiss—
All powerful Love! canst thou no marvel work like this?

O Love! thou wert a God in the past days,
When Earth was young and Passion in her prime;
Immortal Love! the poet's antique lays
Have charmed thy followers from the touch of Time;
Wake once again, and if the minstrel-chime
Of tuneful numbers please thee, hear me now,—
Responsive to the worship of my rhyme,
Give me to gaze upon that dear-loved brow—
Great are the Gods alone who list a votary's vow.

What comes? bright Heaven, 'tis she! Lo, on the air,
I see her misty image dawn like day;
The wind flows under and uplifts her hair,
And as I gaze upon her, fast away
Roll these dim scenes; I feel the cool, white spray
Sprinkle my fevered forehead,—and I stand
Beside her—doth she see me not?—I lay
My trembling fingers on her lifted hand—
She starts not—feels not—sees nought save the sea-washed sand.

O, if I dream, then sleeping let me die!
If this be phrensy, let me mad remain!
Alas! she fades—her form eludes my eye—
Farewell the vision—all is dark again!
Now to my lonely couch, this ceaseless pain
To drug with slumber: yet, immortal Love,
Accept the homage of my humble strain,
That, bending from the placid realms above,
Thy magic hand for me this dear delusion wove.

Once more I call thee, darling, to my dreams,—
Come from the East thou fairer than the morn;
Shed on my sleep thy shadowy smiles, as beams
Are showered at dawn on blossoms newly born;
And, ere the dews are jewels on the corn
Around thy dwelling—ere the drowsy night
Wakes, starts and flies—oh seek these arms forlorn,
Chase the sad shadows from my clouded sight,
And thrill my hushed, cold heart with dreams of old delight.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER FOURTEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, March 15, 1852.

THIS fifteenth day of March, has risen upon us with all the primeval splendor of the birth-morn of creation. The lovely river—having resumed its crimson border, (the so-long idle miners being again busily at work,) glides by, laughing gaily, leaping and clapping its glad waves joyfully in the golden sunlight. The feathery fringe of the fir-trees glitters, like emerald, in the luster bathing air. A hundred tiny rivulets flash down from the brow of the mountains, as if some mighty Titan, standing on the other side, had flung athwart their greenness, a chaplet of radiant pearls. Of the large quantities of snow which have fallen within the past fortnight, a few patches of shining whiteness, high up among the hills, alone remain ; while, to finish the picture, the lustrous heaven of California, looking “further off” than ever, through the wonderfully transparent atmosphere, and for that very reason, infinitely more beautiful, bends over all the matchless blue of its resplendent arch. Ah ! the heaven of the Golden Land. To you, living beneath the murky skies of New England, how unimaginably lovely it is ! A small poetess has said that “*She* could not love a scene, where the blue sky was *always* blue.” I think that it is not so with me ; I am sure that I never weary of the succession of rainless months, and the azure dome, day after day so mistless, which bends above this favored country.

Between each stroke of the pen, I stop to glance at that splendor, whose sameness never falls ; but now, a flock of ringdoves break for a moment, with dots of purple, its monotonous beauty ; and the carol of a tiny bird, (the first of the season,) though I cannot see the darling, fills the joyful air with its matin song.

All along the side of the hill, rising behind the Bar, and on the latter also, glance spots of azure and crimson, in the forms of blue and red-shirted miners, bending steadily over pick-axe and shovel ; reminding one involuntarily of the muck-gatherer in “Pilgrim’s Progress.” But, no, that is an unjust association of ideas ; for many of these men are toiling thus wearily for laughing-lipped children, calm-browed wives, or saintly mothers, gathering around the household hearth, in some far-away country. Even among the few now remaining on the river, there are wanderers from the whole broad earth ; and, O ! what a world of poetic recollection is suggested by their living presence ! From happiest homes, and such luxuriant lands, has the golden magnet drawn its victims. From those palm-girdled isles of the Pacific, which Melville’s gifted pen has consecrated to such beautiful romance ; from Indies, blazing through the dim past with funeral pyres, upon whose perfumed

flame, ascended to God, the chaste souls of her devoted wives ; from the grand old woods of classic Greece, haunted by nymph and satyr, naiad and grace, grape-crowned Bacchus and beauty-zoned Venus ; from the polished heart of artificial Europe, from the breezy backwoods of young America, from the tropical languor of Asian Savannah ; from *every* spot shining through the rosy light of beloved old fables, or consecrated by lofty deeds of heroism or devotion, or shrined in our heart of hearts, as the sacred home of some great or gifted one, they gather to the golden harvest.

You will hear in the same day, almost at the same time, the lofty melody of the Spanish language, the piquant polish of the French, (which, though not a *musical* tongue, is the most *useful* of them all,) the silver, changing clearness of the Italian, the harsh gangle of the German, the hissing precision of the English, the liquid sweetness of the Kanaka, and the sleep-inspiring languor of the East Indian. To complete the catalogue, there is the *native* Indian, with his guttural vocabulary of twenty words ! When I hear these sounds so strangely different, and look at the speakers, I fancy them a living polyglot of the languages, a perambulating picture gallery, illustrative of national variety in form and feature.

By the way, speaking of languages, nothing is more amusing, than to observe the different styles, in which the generality of the Americans talk *at* the unfortunate Spaniard. In the first place, many of them really believe, that when they have learned *sabe* and *vamos*, (two words which they seldom use in the right place,) *poco tiempo*, *si*, and *bueno*, (the last they *will* persist in pronouncing *whayno*,) they have the whole of the glorious Castilian at their tongue's end. Some, however, eschew the above words entirely, and innocently fancy, that by splitting the tympanum of an unhappy foreigner, in screaming forth their sentences in good solid English, they can be surely understood ; others, at the imminent risk of dislocating their own limbs and the jaws of their listeners, by the laughs which their efforts elicit, make the most excruciatingly grotesque gestures, and think that *that* is speaking Spanish. The majority, however, place a most beautiful and touching faith in *broken English*, and when they murder it, with the few words of Castilian quoted above, are firmly convinced, that it is nothing but their "ugly dispositions" which makes the Spaniards pretend not to understand them.

One of those dear, stupid Yankees, who *will*, now and then, venture out of sight of the smoke of their own chimneys, as far as California, was relating *his* experience in this particular the other day. It seems that he had lost a horse somewhere among the hills, and during his search for it, met a gentlemanly Chileno, who, with national suavity, made the most desperate efforts to understand the questions put to him. Of course, *Chileno* was so stupid that he did not succeed, for it is not possible that one of the "Great American People" could fail to express himself clearly, even in Hebrew, if he takes it into his cute head, to speak that ancient, but highly respectable, language. Our Yankee friend, however, would not allow the poor fellow even the excuse of stupidity, but declared that he only "played possum from sheer *ugli-*

ness." "Why," he added, in relating the circumstance, "the cross, old rascal pretended not to understand his own language, though I said as plainly as possible, '*Señor, sabe mi horso vamos poco tempo?*' which, perhaps, you don't know," he proceeded to say, (in a benevolent desire to enlighten our ignorance and teach us a little Castilian,) "means, 'Sir, I have lost my horse, have you seen it?'" I am ashamed to acknowledge, that we did *not* know the above written Anglo-Spanish sentence to mean *that*! The honest fellow concluded his story by declaring, (and it is a common remark with uneducated Americans) with a most self-glorifying air of *pity* for the poor Spaniards, "They ain't kinder like *cour* folks,"—or, as that universal Aunt Somebody used so expressively to observe, "Somehow, they ain't *folksy*!"

The mistakes made on the other side, are often quite as amusing. Dr. Cañas related to us a laughable anecdote of a countryman of his, with whom he happened to camp, on his first arrival in San Francisco. None of the party could speak a word of English, and the person referred to, as ignorant as the rest, went out to purchase bread, which he procured, by laying down some money, and pointing to a loaf of that necessary edible. He probably heard a person use the words "some bread," for he rushed home, Cañas said, in a perfect burst of newly acquired wisdom, and informed his friends that he had found out the English for *pan*, and that when they wished any of that article, they need but enter a bake-shop, and utter the word *sombrero*, in order to obtain it! His hearers were delighted to know *that* much of the *infernal lengua*, greatly marveling, however, that the same word which meant *hat*, in Castilian, should mean *bread* in English. The Spaniards have a saying, to the following effect, "Children speak in Italian, ladies speak in French, God speaks in Spanish, and the Devil speaks in English."

I commenced this letter with the intention of telling you about the weary, weary storm, which has not only thrown a damp over our spirits, but has saturated them, as it has everything else, with a deluge of moisture. The Storm King commenced his reign (or rain) on the twenty-eighth of February, and proved himself a perfect Proteus during his residence with us. For one entire week, he descended daily and nightly without an hour's cessation, in a forty Niagara power of water; and just as we were getting reconciled to this wet state of affairs, and were thinking seriously of learning to swim, one gloomy evening when we least expected such a change, he stole softly down, and garlanded us in a wreath of shining snow-flakes, and lo! the next morning you would have thought that some great white bird had shed its glittering feathers all over rock, tree, hill and bar; he finished his vagaries by loosening, rattling and crashing upon this devoted spot, a small skyful of hailstones, which, aided by a terrific wind, waged terrible warfare against the frail tents, and the calico-shirt huts, and made even the shingles on the roofs of the log-cabins tremble amid their nails.

The river, usually so bland and smiling, looked really terrific. It rose to an unexampled height, and tore along its way, a perfect mass of dark-foamed, turbid waves. At one time we had serious fears that

the water would cover the whole bar, for it approached within two or three feet of the Humboldt. A sawmill, which had been built at a great expense by two gentlemen of Rich Bar, in order to be ready for the sawing of lumber, for the extensive fluming operations which are in contemplation this season, was entirely swept away,—nearly ruining, (it is said,) the owner. I heard a great shout early one morning, and running to the window, had the sorrow to see wheels, planks, etc., sailing merrily down the river. All along the banks of the stream, men were trying to save the more valuable portions of the mill, but the torrent was so furious that it was utterly impossible to rescue a plank. How the haughty river seemed to laugh to scorn the feeble efforts of man? How its mad waves tossed in wild derision, the costly workmanship of his skilful hands! But know, proud Rio de las Plumas, that these very men, whose futile efforts you fancy that you have for once so gloriously defeated, will gather from beneath your lowest depths the beautiful ore, which you thought you had hidden forever and forever, beneath your azure beauty!

It is certainly most amusing, to hear of the different plans which the poor miners invented to pass the time during the trying season of rains. Of course, poker and euchre, whist and nine-pins, to say nothing of monte and faro, are now in constant requisition. But as a person would starve to death on *toujours des perdrix*, so a man cannot *always* be playing cards. Some *literary* bipeds, I have been told, reduced to the last degree of intellectual destitution, in a beautiful spirit of self-martyrdom, betook themselves to blue blankets, bunks and Ned Buntline's novels. And one day an unhappy youth went pen-mad, and in a melancholy fit of authorship wrote a thrilling account of our dreadful situation, which, directed to the editor of a Marysville paper, was sealed up in a keg and set adrift, and is at this moment, no doubt, stranded, high and dry, in the streets of Sacramento, for it is generally believed, that the cities of the plain have been under water during the storm. The chief amusement, however, has been the raffling of gold rings. There is a silversmith here, who, like the rest of the miserable inhabitants, having nothing to do, discovered that he could make gold rings. Of course every person must have a specimen of his workmanship, and the next thing was to raffle it off. The winner generally repeating the operation. Nothing was done or talked of for some days, but this important business.

I have one of these rings, which is really very beautifully finished, and, although, perhaps at home, it would look vulgar, there is a sort of massive and barbaric grandeur about it, which seems well-suited to our wild life of the hills. I shall send you one of these, which will be to you a curiosity, and will doubtless look strangely enough amid the graceful and airy politeness of French jewelry. But I think that it will be interesting to you, as having been manufactured in the mines, by an inexperienced workman, and without the necessary tools. If it is too hideous to be worn upon your slender little finger, you can have it engraved for a seal, and attach it as a charm to your watch chain.

Last evening, Mr. C. showed us a specimen ring which he had just finished. It is the handsomest *natural* specimen that I ever saw. Pure

gold is generally dull in hue, but this is of a most beautiful shade of yellow, and extremely brilliant. It is, in shape and size, exactly like the flower of the jonquil. In the center, is inserted, with all the nice finish of art, (or rather of Nature, for it is her work) a polished piece of quartz, of the purest shade of pink; and between each radiant petal is set a tiny crystal of colorless quartz, every one of which flashes like a real diamond. It is known beyond doubt, to be a real live specimen, as many saw it when it was first taken from the earth, and the owner has carried it carelessly in his pocket for months. We would gladly have given fifty dollars for it, though its nominal value is only about an ounce, but it is already promised, as a present, to a gentleman in Marysville. Although rather a clumsy ring, it would make a most unique broach, and, indeed, is almost the *only* piece of unmanufactured ore, which I have ever seen, that I would be willing to wear. I have a piece of gold, which, without any alteration, except, of course engraving, will make a beautiful seal. It is in the shape of an eagle's head, and is wonderfully perfect. It was picked up from the surface of the ground, by a gentleman, on his first arrival here, and he said that he would give it to the next lady to whom he should be introduced. He carried it in his purse for more than a year, when, in obedience to the promise made when he found it, it became the property of your humble servant, Shirley.

The other day a hole caved in, burying up to the neck, two unfortunates, who were in it at the time. Luckily, they were but slightly injured.

T. is at present attending a man at the junction, who was stabbed very severely in the back during a drunken frolic. The people have not taken the slightest notice of this affair, although for some days the life of the wounded man was despaired of. The perpetrator of the deed had not the slightest provocation from his unfortunate victim.

BOAT SONG.

—
BY G.
—

MERRILY sing, though day is closing
And the shadows lengthen'd fall,
We on cheerful hopes reposing
Heed not evening's gloomy pall;
Though the god of day forsake us,
We've a god within our breast,
And the power of Love shall make us
In the darkest hour blest.

Merrily sing, Heaven's arch is gleaming
With the stars' eternal light,
And the gentle moon is beaming
Silvery glory on the night;
O may we, when Life's day closes,
Safely reach the promised shore,
Where undying day discloses
Light and life for evermore.

RECOLLECTIONS OF INCIDENTS IN ENGLAND.

BY J. P. ANTHONY.

NO. I.—THE STRANGE HOUSE AT DOLGELLY.

WHEN draw the prosperous near me, I forget
The Gods of Heaven; but where
Sorrow and suffering in my sight are set,
The Gods, I feel, are there.

SCHILLER.

IN introducing the recollections to the readers of *The Pioneer*, the writer would observe, that he seeks no higher object than that of amusing by the narration of incidents, which somewhat deviate from the common occurrences of every-day life. On the attention of lovers of the marvelous, he has no claims—possessing not the gift of imagination to embellish, nor indeed, the desire to coin strange things, to add to the interest of his story. To those, however, who in the calm, unruffled repose of a stationary life, care but to know the romance of reality through other media than self-experience, these incidents may fairly be presumed to possess some interest, penned, as they will be, by one who has seen much variety in life, and in the quiet village as well as the crowded city, mingled with almost every grade of the great family of man.

In the words of the “Rambler,” however, the reader is requested to accommodate his mind to the author’s design; and as he will have no interest in refusing the amusement that is offered to him, not to interrupt his tranquility by studied cavils or destroy his satisfaction in that which may be already well, by inquiring how it might be better—to be content without pleasure, or pleased without perfection.

With this brief preface, will I now proceed to my story of “The Strange House at Dolgelly;” and in the event of any of my readers being familiar with the part of the habitable globe, where the narrative opens, they will readily admit, that a more remarkable spot to harmonize with the singularity of such a meeting, as my story will reveal, could not be chosen, were I framing a fiction, and selecting from the most remarkable places in Britain.

By lovers of the grand and beautiful in combination, the scenery of North Wales has ever been enthusiastically admired. It is worth a pilgrimage, alone, to look upon Cader Idris, that, like our own Diabolo, soars to Heaven a landmark of grandeur! It is a sight never to be forgotten, to behold the giant Cader from the deep and dark ravine, through which winds the road from Machynlleth to Dolgelly, over whose path beetle huge rocks, as pile on pile in majestic ruggedness they mount in aspiring grandeur to the clouds. Here, turning his gaze towards the opening in the hills, which admit him to the rocky pass, the traveler may behold low in the distance, a far-spreading lake, whose waters are not unfrequently lashed into waves by the wild winds that here prevail, and which howling, rush onward with a sound like the cries of troops of demons, or the voices of spirits of the frowning rocks and sterile

order, though we were innocent of fast crabs, or "2·40's" then. Perhaps we didn't sing and shout, and yell, and make ourselves ridiculous in every possible way, until the old horse, even, turned his head around to see what the row was; perhaps we didn't carry the hall door by assault, and enter the house with sufficient noise for a troop of horse; perhaps we did not hug and kiss the family, collectively and separately, jointly and individually; perhaps we did not tumble on the sofas, knock over the chairs, and make ourselves generally disagreeable, until even your long-suffering mother was forced to say, "Now boys." Perhaps we didn't; but I rather think we did. Indeed, I have a dim recollection of bringing up in the kitchen, kissing plump Margaret, the cook. If I did, what harm? I've had worse kissing since. We cooled down a little at tea-time, still our appetites were on the diminutive order, and our hearts filled the passage intended for our food.

How we sang, and danced, and romped that night, (the Moselys were there,) until, fairly tired out, we sat down to our fruit and cake. Then your father, filling each a glass, for you, Robert Mosely and I, said, "Your good health, young gentlemen." Didn't you grow about that time? The Moselys went—then a breathing pause, like a rest in a rapturous song. Then Nelly, handing each of us a bed candle, desired us to partake of a light supper; then up the stairs, laughing still singing, to bed.

The next sun shone on us "Freshmen." Ah, how fresh! Like young bears, all our troubles were to come; yet I would not hesitate at any sacrifice, could I again feel the same exultant self-satisfaction and supreme contempt for all the world beside that I experienced that morning.

You felt so too, I know; for as we walked down the main street together, our first appearance thereon in all the brilliancy of our new frock coats and t'other things to match, you repelled with dignity all attempts at familiarity, and remarked to me, confidentially, that "Jim Smith seemed to think that a man had nothing to do but listen to his vulgar nonsense." Do you remember? If so, I'll jog your memory again.

SONG OF A CHRYSALIS.

BY G.

WHEN blushing morn gives radiant day
Its first and sweetest breath,
And gloomy night, in pale affright,
Shrinks in the arms of death—
'Tis then, when earth in perfum'd dew
Lies bath'd, I'd first behold,
At morning's prime, my sunny clime,
And spread my wings of gold.

When noon-day with its sultry heat,
Drives to the shady grove
The gentle bird, whose song is heard,
In softest notes of love—

'Tis then I'd cease my giddy flight,
With life and joy elate,
And pass the hours amid the flowers,
In bliss with some gay mate.

When sunset with its glowing tints
Throws giant shadows round,
And blossoms close, and flowers repose,
With heads bent to the ground—
'Tis then I'd bid adieu to life,
To earth and radiant sky,
Before the might of one dark night
Had told me all must die.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER FIFTEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, April 10, 1852.

I HAVE been haunted all day, my dear M., with an intense ambition to write you a letter, which shall be dreadfully commonplace and severely utilitarian in its style and contents. Not but that my epistles are *always* commonplace enough, (spirits of Montague and Sevigné, forgive me!) but hitherto I have not really *tried* to make them so. Now, however, I *intend* to be stupidly prosy, with malice aforethought, and without one mitigating circumstance, except, perchance, it be the temptations of that above-mentioned ambitious little devil to palliate my crime.

You would certainly wonder, were you seated where I now am, how any one with a quarter of a soul, *could* manufacture herself into a bore, amid such surroundings as these. The air is as balmy as that of a midsummer's day in the sunniest valleys of New England. It is four o'clock in the evening, and I am sitting on a segar-box outside of our cabin. From this spot not a person is to be seen, except a man who is building a new wing to the "Humboldt." Not a human sound, but a slight noise made by the aforesaid individual, in tacking on a roof of blue drilling to the room which he is finishing, disturbs the stillness which fills this purest air. I confess that it is difficult to fix my eyes upon the dull paper, and my fingers upon the duller pen with which I am soiling it. Almost every other minute, I find myself stopping to listen to the ceaseless river-psalm, or to gaze up into the wondrous depths of the California Heaven; to watch the graceful movements of the pretty brown lizards, jerking up their impudent little heads above a moss-wrought log which lies before me, or to mark the dancing water-shadow on the canvas door of the bake-shop opposite; to follow with childish eyes the flight of a golden butterfly, curious to know if it will crown, with a capital of winged beauty, that column of Nature's carving, the pine stump rising at my feet, or whether it will flutter down (for it is dallying coquettishly around them both,) upon that slate-rock beyond, shining so darkly lustrous through a flood of yellow sunlight; or I lazily turn my head, wondering if I know the blue or red-shirted miner who is descending the precipitous hill behind me. In sooth, Molly, it is easy to be commonplace at all times, but I confess that, just at present, I find it difficult to be utilitary; the saucy lizards—the great, orange-dotted butterflies—the still, solemn cedars—the sailing smoke-wreath and the vaulted splendor above, are wooing me so winningly to higher things.

But, as I said before, I have an ambition that way, and I *will* succeed. You are such a good-natured little thing, dear, that I know

you will meekly allow yourself to be victimized into reading the profound and prosy remarks which I shall make, in my efforts to initiate you into the mining polity of this place. Now you may rest assured that I shall assert nothing upon the subject which is not perfectly correct; for have I not earned a character for inquisitiveness, (and you know that does *not* happen to be one of my failings,) which I fear will cling to me through life, by my persevering questions to all the unhappy miners from whom I thought I could gain any information. Did I not martyrize myself into a human mule, by descending to the bottom of a dreadful pit, (suffering mortal terror all the time, lest it should cave in upon me,) actuated by a virtuous desire to see with my own two eyes the process of underground mining, thus enabling myself to be stupidly correct in all my statements thereupon? Did I not ruin a pair of silk velvet slippers, lame my ankles for a week, and draw a "browner horror" over my already sun-burnt face, in a wearisome walk miles away, to the head of the "ditch," as they call the prettiest little rivulet (though the work of men)—that I ever saw; yea, verily, this have I done for the express edification of yourself, and the rest of your curious tribe, to be rewarded, probably, by the impertinent remark,—“What *does* that little goose, ‘Dame Shirley,’ think that *I* care about such things?” But madam, in spite of your sneer, I shall proceed in my allotted task.

In the first place, then, as to the discovery of gold. In California, at least, it must be confessed, that in this particular, science appears to be completely at fault;—or, as an intelligent and well-educated miner remarked to us the other day, “I maintain that science is the blindest guide that one could have on a gold-finding expedition. Those men, who judge by the appearance of the soil, and depend upon geological calculations, are invariably disappointed, while the ignorant adventurer, who digs just for the sake of digging, is almost sure to be successful.” I suppose that the above observation is quite correct, as all whom we have questioned upon the subject repeat, in substance, the same thing. Wherever Geology has said that gold *must* be, there, perversely enough, it lies not; and wherever her ladyship has declared that it could *not* be, there has it oftenest garnered up in miraculous profusion the yellow splendor of its virgin beauty. It is certainly very painful to a well-regulated mind to see the irreverent contempt, shown by this beautiful mineral, to the dictates of science; but what better can one expect from the “root of all evil?” As well as can be ascertained, the most lucky of the mining Columbuses, have been ignorant sailors; and foreigners, I fancy, are more successful than Americans.

Our countrymen are the most discontented of mortals. They are always longing for “big strikes.” If a “claim” is paying them a steady income, by which, if they pleased, they could lay up more in a month, than they could accumulate in a year at home, still, they are dissatisfied, and, in most cases, will wander off in search of better “diggings.” There are hundreds now pursuing this foolish course, who, if they had stopped where they first “camped,” would now have been rich men. Sometimes, a company of these wanderers will find itself upon a bar, where a few pieces of the precious metal lie

scattered upon the surface of the ground ; of course they immediately "prospect" it, which is accomplished, by "panning out" a few basinsful of the soil. If it "pays," they "claim" the spot, and build their shanties ; the news spreads that wonderful "diggings" have been discovered at such a place,—the monte-dealers, those worse than fiends, rush vulture-like upon the scene and erect a round tent, where, in gambling, drinking, swearing and fighting, the *many* reproduce Pandemonium in more than its original horror, while a *few* honestly and industriously commence digging for gold, and lo ! as if a fairy's wand had been waved above the bar, a full-grown mining town hath sprung into existence.

But first, let me explain to you the "claiming" system. As there are no State laws upon the subject, each mining community is permitted to make its own. Here, they have decided that no man may "claim" an area of more than forty feet square. This he "stakes off" and puts a notice upon it, to the effect that he "holds" it for mining purposes. If he does not choose to "work it" immediately, he is obliged to renew the notice every ten days ; for without this precaution, any other person has a right to "jump it," that is, to take it from him. There are many ways of evading the above law. For instance, an individual can "hold" as many "claims" as he pleases, if he keeps a man at work in each, for this workman represents the original owner. I am told, however, that the laborer, himself, can "jump" the "claim" of the very man who employs him, if he pleases so to do. This is seldom, if ever, done ; the person who is willing to be hired, generally prefers to receive the six dollars *per diem*, of which he is *sure* in any case, to running the risk of a "claim" not proving valuable. After all, the "holding of claims" by proxy is considered rather as a carrying out of the spirit of the law, than as an evasion of it. But there are many ways of *really* outwitting this rule, though I cannot stop now to relate them, which give rise to innumerable arbitrations, and nearly every Sunday, there is a "miners' meeting" connected with this subject.

Having got our gold mines discovered, and "claimed," I will try to give you a faint idea of how they "work" them. Here, in the mountains, the labor of excavation is extremely difficult, on account of the immense rocks which form a large portion of the soil. Of course, no man can "work out" a "claim" alone. For that reason, and also for the same that makes partnerships desirable, they congregate in companies of four or six, generally designating themselves by the name of the place from whence the majority of the members have emigrated ; as for example, the "Illinois," "Bunker Hill," "Bay State," etc., companies. In many places the surface-soil, or in mining-phrase, the "top dirt," "pays" when worked in a "Long Tom." This machine, (I have never been able to discover the derivation of its name,) is a trough, generally about twenty feet in length, and eight inches in depth, formed of wood, with the exception of six feet at one end, called the "riddle," (query, why riddle?) which is made of sheet-iron, perforated with holes about the size of a large marble. Underneath this cullender-like portion of the "long-tom," is placed another trough,

about ten feet long, the sides six inches perhaps in height, which divided through the middle by a slender slat, is called the "riffle-box." It takes several persons to manage, properly, a "long-tom." Three or four men station themselves with spades, at the head of the machine, while at the foot of it, stands an individual armed "wid de shovel and de hoe." The spademen throw in large quantities of the precious dirt, which is washed down to the "riddle" by a stream of water leading into the "long-tom" through wooden gutters or "sluices." When the soil reaches the "riddle," it is kept constantly in motion by the man with the hoe. Of course, by this means, all the dirt and gold escapes through the perforations into the "riffle-box" below, one compartment of which is placed just beyond the "riddle." Most of the dirt washes over the sides of the "riffle-box," but the gold being so astonishingly heavy remains safely at the bottom of it. When the machine gets too full of stones to be worked easily, the man whose business it is to attend to them throws them out with his shovel, looking carefully among them as he does so for any pieces of gold, which may have been too large to pass through the holes of the "riddle." I am sorry to say that he generally loses his labor. At night they "pan out" the gold, which has been collected in the "riffle-box" during the day. Many of the miners decline washing the "top dirt" at all, but try to reach as quickly as possible the "bed-rock," where are found the richest deposits of gold. The river is supposed to have formerly flowed over this "bed-rock," in the "crevices" of which, it left, as it passed away, the largest portions of the so eagerly sought for ore. The group of mountains amidst which we are living is a spur of the Sierra Nevada; and the "bed-rock," (which in this vicinity is of slate) is said to run through the entire range, lying, in distance varying from a few feet to eighty or ninety, beneath the surface of the soil. On Indian Bar, the "bed-rock" falls in almost perpendicular "benches," while at Rich Bar, the friction of the river has formed it into large, deep basins, in which the gold, instead of being found, as you would naturally suppose, in the bottom of it, lies for the most part, just below the rim. A good-natured individual bored *me*, and tired *himself*, in a hopeless attempt to make me comprehend that this was only a necessary consequence of the under-current of the water; but with my usual stupidity upon such matters, I got but a vague idea from his scientific explanation, and certainly shall not mystify *you*, with my confused notions thereupon.

When a company wish to reach the bed rock as quickly as possible, they "sink a shaft," (which is nothing more nor less than digging a well,) until they "strike" it. They then commence "drifting coyote holes" (as they call them) in search of "crevices," which, as I told you before, often pay immensely. These "coyote holes" sometimes extend hundreds of feet into the side of the hill. Of course they are obliged to use lights in working them. They generally proceed, until the air is so impure as to extinguish the lights, when they return to the entrance of the excavation, and commence another, perhaps close to it. When they think that a "coyote hole" has been faithfully "worked," they "clean it up," which is done by scraping the surface of the "bed

rock" with a knife,—lest by chance they have overlooked a "crevice,"—and they are often richly rewarded for this precaution.

Now I must tell you how those having "claims" on the hills procure the water for washing them. The expense of raising it in any way from the river, is too enormous to be thought of for a moment. In most cases it is brought from ravines in the mountains. A company, to which a friend of ours belongs, has dug a ditch about a foot in width and depth, and more than three miles in length, which is fed in this way. I wish that you could see this ditch. I never beheld a NATURAL streamlet more exquisitely beautiful. It undulates over the mossy roots, and the gray, old rocks, like a capricious snake, singing all the time a low song with the "liquidest murmur," and one might almost fancy it the airy and coquettish Undine herself. When it reaches the top of the hill, the sparkling thing is divided into five or six branches, each one of which supplies one, two, or three "long-toms." There is an extra one, called the "waste-ditch," leading to the river, into which the water is shut off at night and on Sundays. This "race" (another and peculiar name for it) has already cost the company more than five thousand dollars. They sell the water to others at the following rates: Those that have the first use of it pay ten per cent. upon all the gold that they take out. As the water runs off from their machine, (it now goes by the elegant name of "tailings,") it is taken by a company lower down; and as it is not worth so much as when it was clear, the latter pay but seven per cent. If any others wish the "tailings," now still less valuable than at first, they pay four per cent. on all the gold which they take out, be it much or little. The water companies are constantly in trouble, and the arbitrations on that subject are very frequent.

I think that I gave you a vague idea of "fluming" in a former letter; I will not, therefore, repeat it here, but will merely mention, that the numerous "fluming" companies have already commenced their extensive operations upon the river.

As to the "rockers," so often mentioned in story and in song, I have not spoken of them since I commenced this letter. The truth is, that I have seldom seen them used, though hundreds are lying ownerless along the banks of the river. I suppose that other machines are better adapted to mining operations in the mountains.

Gold mining is Nature's great lottery scheme. A man may work in a claim for many months, and be poorer at the end of the time than when he commenced; or he may "take out" thousands in a few hours. It is a mere matter of chance. A friend of ours, a young Spanish surgeon from Guatemala, a person of intelligence and education, told us that, after "working a claim" for six months, he had taken out but six ounces.

It must be acknowledged, however, that if a person "work his claim" himself, is economical and industrious, keeps his health, and is satisfied with small gains, he is "bound" to make money. And yet, I cannot help remarking, that almost all with whom we are acquainted seem to have *lost*. Some have had their "claims" jumped; many holes which had been excavated, and prepared for working at a great

expense, caved in during the heavy rains of the fall and winter. Often after a company has spent an immense deal of time and money in "sinking a shaft," the water from the springs, (the greatest obstacle which the miner has to contend with in this vicinity) rushes in so fast, that it is impossible to work in them, or to contrive any machinery to keep it out, and for that reason only, men have been compelled to abandon places where they were at the very time "taking out" hundreds of dollars a day. If a fortunate or an unfortunate (which shall I call him?) *does* happen to make a "big strike," he is almost sure to fall into the hands of the professed gamblers, who soon relieve him of all care of it. They have not troubled the Bar much during the winter, but as the spring opens, they flock in like ominous birds of prey. Last week one left here, after a stay of four days, with over a thousand dollars of the hard-earned gold of the miners. But enough of these best-beloved of Beelzebub, so infinitely worse than the robber or murderer;—for surely it would be kinder to take a man's life, than to poison him with the fatal passion for gambling.

Perhaps you would like to know what class of men is most numerous in the mines. As well as I can judge, there are upon this river as many foreigners as Americans. The former, with a few exceptions, are extremely ignorant and degraded; though we have the pleasure of being acquainted with three or four Spaniards of the highest education and accomplishments. Of the Americans, the majority are of the better class of mechanics. Next to these, in number, are the sailors and the farmers. There are a few merchants and steamboat-clerks, three or four physicians, and one lawyer. We have no ministers, though fourteen miles from here there is a "Rancho," kept by a man of distinguished appearance, an accomplished monte-dealer and horse-jockey, who is *said* to have been—in the States—a preacher of the Gospel. I know not if this be true; but at any rate, such things are not uncommon in California.

I have spun this letter out until my head aches dreadfully. How tiresome it is to write *sensible* (?) things! But I have one comfort,—though my epistle may not be interesting, you will not deny, dear M., that I have achieved my ambition of making it both commonplace and utilitary.

TO MINNIE SPEAR.

BY SHORTEFELLOW.

Oh what sorrow in the parting
From the friends we love so well:
Who can hide the tear from starting,
When they bid a last farewell.

Oft I thought I heard it spoken,
Out upon the dark, blue sea,
But it came in accents broken,
Not as whispered unto me.

In my midnight vigils keeping,
Voices come that I know well,

Not in kindly accents greeting,
But in echos of farewell.

When in foreign lands we travel,
Death may hover round our way,
Who can Fate's decrees unravel,
Who can say we'll live to-day.

That farewell may be forever,
There is one alone can tell;
And from friends we may not ever
Hear another fond farewell.

SOMEWHAT OF THE HISTORY AND GEOLOGY OF THE MINES.

—
BY AN OLD MINER.
—

THE great staple of California is gold ; and although almost every village in the thirty-one States of our Union, is represented by some one of its numbers in the mines, and many a parent's heart is gladdened by letters from an absent son,—yet how few of these give correct, accurate and reliable information, concerning the auriferous regions of California ; their letters are mostly of a private nature, containing the expression of the heart's feelings, or the relation of personal adventures ; therefore, in what I shall say touching the above topics, I shall aim to be practical, and to give such information as will enable persons unacquainted with the subject, to gain some correct knowledge of the great mining interests of California.

There has been a great change in the whole system of mining, within the last year or two. At first, the rocker, quicksilver-machine and long-tom were used. The first required but one man, who dug and carried his dirt in buckets to the shore of the stream, dipped his water with an oyster-can tied to a stick, poured it over the dirt in the "hopper" with one hand, while he "rocked the cradle with the other." The second, was a sheet-iron hopper and trough beneath it, with partitions filled with quicksilver—all set upon rockers. It required one man to rock, one to put in the dirt as it was dug and brought in wheelbarrows, and another to remove the "tailings." Water was brought from an elevation in hose, made of canvas, then turned into a box perforated with holes, above the hopper, and by this means sprinkled over the dirt, washing the fine particles through—the coarse being drawn out of the open end. The "long-tom" was a trough of some twelve feet in length, with a sheet-iron screen at the lower end, that let the gold and fine dirt into a trough below, with cells and quicksilver to save the gold ; the coarse stones and gravel were shoveled out by one man, while the dirt was put in by another.

But these devices, which served their day, are mostly superseded by the "sluice," which is a continuous inclined trough with, here and there, cells in the bottom to save the gold. Water is turned in at the upper end, and the dirt shoveled in wherever convenient. What is termed hydraulic washing, is where the sluice is set at the bottom of a "drift hill," and water is conducted from an elevation in hose ending in a metallic nozzle,—the stream being directed against the embankment, and by its force cutting it down and carrying it off in the sluice. This is the cheapest mode of washing, as it saves all the labor of digging, wheeling, etc., but can only be used where water can be conducted from a hill, and where the dirt is soft.

In our early history, placer and river mining were of the most importance ; now, tunneling seems to take precedence. Gold is obtained in this way, by first sinking shafts to find the lead, and then tunneling in from the foot of the hill,—generally from some creek, ravine or river.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, May 1, 1852.

You have no idea, my good, little M., how reluctantly I have seated myself to write to you. The truth is, that my last tedious letter about mining and other tiresome things has completely exhausted my scribbling powers, and from that hour to this the epistolary spirit has never moved me forward. Whether on that important occasion, my small brain received a shock from which it will never recover, or whether it is pure, physical laziness, which influenced me, I know not; but this is certain, that no whipt school-boy ever crept to his hated task more unwillingly, than I to my writing desk on this beautiful morning. Perhaps my indisposition to soil paper in your behalf is caused by the bewildering scent of that great, glorious bouquet of flowers, which, gathered in the crisp mountain air, is throwing off cloud after cloud ("each cloud *faint* with the fragrance it bears,") of languid sweetness, filling the dark old room with incense, and making of it a temple of beauty; like those pure, angelic souls, which, irradiating a plain countenance, often render it more lovely than the chiseled finish of the most perfect features.

O, Molly! how I wish that I could send you this jar of flowers, containing, as it does, many which in New England are rare exotics. Here, you will find in richest profusion the fine lady elegance of the syringa; there, glorious, white lilies, so pure and stately; the delicate yet robust beauty of the exquisite privet; irises of every hue and size; and, prettiest of all, a sweet, snow-tinted flower, looking like immense clusters of seed pearl, which the Spaniards call *libla*. But the marvel of the group, is an orange-colored blossom, of a most rare and singular fragrance, growing somewhat in the style of the flox; this, with some branches of pink bloom of incomparable sweetness, is entirely new to me. Since I have commenced writing, one of the Doctor's patients has brought me a bunch of wild roses. O! how vividly at the sight of them started up before me those wooded valleys of the Connecticut, with their wondrous depths of foliage, which for a few weeks in midsummer, are perhaps unsurpassed in beauty by any in the world. I have arranged the dear *home* blossoms with a handful of flowers which were given to me this morning by an unknown Spaniard. They are shaped like an anemone, of the opaque whiteness of the magnolia, with a large spot of glittering blackness at the bottom of each petal. But enough of our mountain earth stars; it would take me all day to describe their "infinite variety."

Nothing of importance has happened since I last wrote, except that the Kanaka wife of a man living at the Junction has made him the happy father of a son and heir. They say that she is quite a pretty

little woman, only fifteen years old, and walked all the way from Sacramento to this place.

A few evenings ago, a Spaniard was stabbed by an American. It seems that the presumptuous foreigner had the impertinence, to ask very humbly and meekly that most noble representative of the stars and stripes, if the latter would pay him a few dollars which he had owed him for some time. His high mightiness, the Yankee, was not going to put up with any such impertinence, and the poor Spaniard received, for answer, several inches of cold steel in his breast, which inflicted a very dangerous wound. Nothing was done, and very little was said about this atrocious affair.

At Rich Bar they have passed a set of resolutions for the guidance of the inhabitants during the summer; one of which is to the effect that no foreigner shall work in the mines on that Bar. This has caused nearly all the Spaniards to immigrate upon Indian Bar, and several new houses for the sale of liquor etc., are building by these people. It seems to me that the above law is selfish, cruel and narrow-minded in the extreme.

When I came here, the Humboldt was the only public house on the Bar. Now there are the "Oriental," "Golden Gate," "Don Juan," and four or five others, the names of which I do not know. On Sundays, the swearing, drinking, gambling and fighting, which are carried on in some of these houses, are truly horrible.

It is extremely healthy, here; with the exception of two or three men who were drowned when the river was so high, I have not heard of a death for months.

Nothing worth wasting ink upon has occurred for some time, except the capture of two grizzly bear cubs by the immortal "Yank." He shot the mother, but she fell over the side of a steep hill, and he lost her. "Yank" intends to tame one of the cubs; the other he sold, I believe, for fifty dollars. They are certainly the funniest looking things that I ever saw, and the oddest possible pets.

By the way, we receive an echo from the outer world once a month, and the expressman never fails to bring three letters from my dear M. wherewith to gladden the heart of her sister, "Dame Shirley."

LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

May 25.

THE very day after I last wrote you, dear M., a troop of mules came on to the Bar, bringing us almost forgotten luxuries, in the form of potatoes, onions and butter. A band of these animals is always a pretty sight, and you can imagine that the solemn fact of our having been destitute of the abovementioned edibles since the middle of February, did not detract from the pleasure with which we saw them winding cautiously down the hill, stepping daintily here and there with those absurd little feet of theirs, and appearing so extremely anxious for the safe conveyance of their loads. They belonged to a Spanish packer; were in excellent condition, sleek and fat as so many kittens, and of every possible color,—black, white, grey, sorrel, cream, brown, etc. Almost all of them had some bit of red, or blue, or yellow,

about their trappings, which added not a little to the brilliancy of their appearance ; while the gay tinkle of the leader's bell, mingling with those shrill and peculiar exclamations, with which Spanish muleteers are in the habit of urging on their animals, made a not unpleasing medley of sounds. But the creameist part of the whole affair was—I must confess it, unromantic as it may seem—when the twenty-five or thirty pretty creatures were collected into the small space between our cabin and the Humboldt ; such a gathering together of ham and mackerel-fed bipeds—such a lavish display of gold dust—such troops of happy looking men, bending beneath the delicious weight of butter and potatos—and above all, *such* a smell of fried onions, as instantaneously rose upon the fragrant California air, and ascended gratefully into the blue California Heaven, was, I think, never experienced before.

On the first of May a train had arrived at Rich Bar ; and on the morning of the day which I have been describing to you, one of our friends arose some three hours earlier than usual, went over to the aforesaid Bar, bought twenty-five pounds of potatos at forty cents a pound, and packed them home on his back. In less than two days afterwards, half a dozen cargoes had arrived, and the same vegetable was selling at a shilling a pound. The trains had been on the road several weeks, but the heavy showers, which had continued almost daily through the month of April, had retarded their arrival.

Last week I rode on horseback to a beautiful Bar called the Junction, so named from the fact that at that point the East Branch of the North Fork of Feather River unites itself with the main North Fork. The mule trail, which lies along the verge of a dreadful precipice, is three or four miles long, while the foot-path leading by the river is not more than two miles in length. The latter is impassable, on account of the log bridges having been swept away by the recent freshets. The other day two oxen lost their footing, and fell over the precipice ; and it is the general opinion that they were killed long before they reached the golden palace of the Plumerian Thetis. I was a little alarmed at first, for fear my horse would stumble, in which case I should have shared the fate of the unhappy beeves, but soon forgot all fear in the enchanting display of flowers which each opening in the shrubs displayed to me. "Earth's firmament" was starred with daphnes, irises and violets of every hue and size ; pale wood anemones, with but one faint sigh of fragrance as they expired, died by hundreds beneath my horse's tread ; and spotted tiger-lilies, with their stately heads all bedizened in orange and black, marshaled along the path like an army of gaily-clad warriors. But the flowers are not all of an Oriental character. Do you remember, Molly, dear, how you and I once quarreled when we were—oh ! such mites of children—about a sprig of syringa ? The dear mother was obliged to interfere, and to make all right, she gave you a small brown bud of most penetrating fragrance, which she told you was much more valuable than the contested flower. I remember perfectly that she failed entirely in convincing *me* that the dark, somber flower was half as beautiful as my pretty, cream-tinted blossom ; and, if I mistake not, you were but

pontingly satisfied with the substitute. Here, even if we retained, which I do not, our childish fascination for syringas, we should not need to quarrel about them, for they are as common as dandelions in a New England meadow, and dispense their peculiar perfume—which, by the way, always reminds me of Lubin's choicest scents—in almost sickening profusion. Besides the above-mentioned flowers, we saw wild roses, and buttercups, and flox, and privet, and whole acres of the "Wandlike lily." I have often heard it said, though I cannot vouch for the truth of the assertion, that it is only during the month of January that you cannot gather a bouquet in the mountains.

Just before one reaches the Junction, there is a beautiful grove of oaks, through which there leaps a gay little rivulet, celebrated for the grateful coolness of its waters. Of course, one is expected to propitiate this pretty Undine by drinking a draught of her glittering waters from a dirty tin cup, which some benevolent cold-water man has suspended from a tree near the spring. The bank leading down into the stream is so steep that people generally dismount and lead their animals across it. But F. declared that I was so light that the horse could easily carry me, and insisted upon my keeping the saddle. Of course, like a dutiful wife, I had nothing to do but to obey. So I grasped firmly the reins, shut my eyes, and committed myself to the Fates that take care of thistle seeds, and lo! the next moment I found myself safely on the other side of the brook; my pretty steed—six weeks ago he was an Indian pony running wild in the prairie—curvetting about and arching his elegant neck, evidently immensely proud of the grace and ease with which he had conveyed his burden across the brook. In a few moments we alighted at the store, which is owned by some friends of F., whom we found looking like so many great daisies, in their new shirts of pink calico, which had been donned in honor of our expected arrival.

The Junction is the most beautiful of all the Bars. From the store, one can walk nearly a mile down the river quite easily. The path is bordered by a row of mingled oaks and firs—the former garlanded with mistletoe, and the latter embroidered with that exquisitely beautiful moss which I tried to describe in one of my first letters.

The little Kanaka woman lives here. I went to see her. She is quite pretty—with large, lustrous eyes, and two great braids of hair, which made me think of black satin cables, they were so heavy and massive. She has good teeth, a sweet smile, and a skin not much darker than that of a French brunette. I never saw any creature so proud as she, almost a child herself, was of her baby. In jest, I asked her to give it to me, and really was almost alarmed at the vehement burst of tears with which she responded to my request. Her husband explained the cause of her distress. It is a superstition among her people that he who refuses to give another anything, no matter what—there are no exceptions which that other may ask for—will be overwhelmed with the most dreadful misfortunes. Her own parents had parted with her for the same reason. Her pretty, girlish face soon resumed its smiles when I told her that I was in jest, and, to console me for the disappointment which she thought I must feel at not obtain-

ing her little brown treasure, she promised to give me the *next* one ! It is a Kanaka custom to make a present to the person calling upon them for the first time ; in accordance with which habit, I received a pair of dove-colored boots three sizes too large for me.

I should liked to have visited the Indian encampment, which lies a few miles from the Junction, but was too much fatigued to attempt it. The Indians often visit us, and as they seldom wear anything but a *very* tight and *very* short shirt, they have an appearance of being, as Charles Dickens would say, all legs. They usually sport some kind of a head-dress, if it is nothing more than a leather string, which they bind across their dusky brows in the style of the wreaths in Norma, or the gay ribbons garlanding the hair of the Roman youth in the play of Brutus. A friend of ours, who has visited their camp several times, has just given me a description of their mode of life. Their huts, ten or twelve in number, are formed of the bark of the pine—conically shaped, plastered with mud, and with a hole in the top, whence emerges the smoke, which rises from a fire built in the center of the apartment. These places are so low that it is quite impossible to stand upright in them, and are entered from a small hole in one side, on all fours. A large stone, sunk to its surface in the ground, which contains three or four pan-like hollows for the purpose of grinding acorns and nuts, is the only furniture which these huts contain. The women, with another stone, about a foot and a half in length, and a little larger than a man's wrist, pulverize the acorns to the finest possible powder, which they prepare for the table (?) in the following manner, viz :—Their cooking utensils consist of a kind of basket, woven of some particular species of reed, I should fancy, from the descriptions which I have had of them, and are so plaited as to be impervious to fluids. These they fill half full of water, which is made to boil by placing in it hot stones. The latter they drag from the fire with two sticks. When the water boils, they stir into it, until it is about as thick as hasty-pudding, the powdered acorns, delicately flavored with dried grasshoppers, and lo ! dinner is ready. Would you like to know how they eat ? They place the thumb and little finger together across the palm of the hand, and make of the other three fingers a spoon, with which they shovel into their capacious mouths this delicious compound.

There are about eighty Indians in all at this encampment, a very small portion of which number are women. A hostile tribe in the valley made a Sabine-like invasion upon the settlement, a few months since, and stole away all the young and fair *muchachas*, leaving them but a few old squaws. These poor, withered creatures, who are seldom seen far from the encampment, do all the drudgery. Their entire wardrobe consists of a fringe about two feet in length, which is formed of the branch or root—I cannot ascertain exactly which—of a peculiar species of shrub shredded into threads. This scanty costume they festoon several times about the person, fastening it just above the hips, and they generally appear in a startlingly unsophisticated state of almost entire nudity. They are very filthy in their habits ; and my informant said that if one of them should venture out into the rain,

grass would grow on her neck and arms. The men, unhappy martyrs ! are compelled to be a little more cleanly, from their custom of hunting and fishing, for the wind *will* blow off *some* of the dirt, and the water washes off more.

Their infants are fastened to a framework of light wood in the same manner as those of the North American Indians. When a squaw has anything to do, she very composedly sets this frame up against the side of the house, as a civilized housewife would an umbrella or broom.

Some of their modes of fishing are very curious. One is as follows : These primitive anglers will seek a quiet, deep spot in the river, where they know fish "most do congregate," and throw therein a large quantity of stones. This, of course, frightens the fish, which dive to the bottom of the stream, and Mr. Indian, plunging head-foremost into the water, beneath which he sometimes remains several minutes, will presently reappear, holding triumphantly in each hand one of the finny tribe, which he kills by giving it a single bite in the head or neck with his sharp, knife-like teeth.

Hardly a day passes during which there are not three or four of them on this Bar. They often come into the cabin, and I never order them away, as most others do, for their childish curiosity amuses me, and as yet they have not been troublesome. There is one beautiful little boy about eight years old, who generally accompanies them. We call him Wild Bird, for he is as shy as a partridge, and we have never yet been able to coax him into the cabin. He always wears a large, red shirt, which, trailing to his little bronzed feet, and the sleeves every other minute dropping down over his dusky models of hands, gives him a very odd appearance. One day Mrs. B., whom I was visiting at the time, coaxed Wild Bird into the house to see Charley, the hero of the champagne-basket cradle. The little fellow gazed at us with his large, startled eyes, without showing the least shadow of fear in his countenance ; but his heart beat so violently that we could actually see the rise and fall of the old red shirt which covered its tremblings. Mrs. B. made our copper-colored cupid on a pretty suit of crimson calico. His protectors, half a dozen grim old Indians, (it was impossible to tell which was his father, they all made such a petted darling of him,) were compelled to array him in his new suit by main strength, he screaming dreadfully all the time. Indeed, so exhausted was he by his shrieks, that by the time he was fairly buttoned up in his Indian trappings, he sank on the ground in a deep sleep. The next day the barbarous little villain appeared trailing, as usual, his pet shirt after him at every step, while the dandy jacket and the trim baby trowsers had vanished we never knew whither.

The other morning an Indian appeared on the Bar robed from neck to heels in a large, white sheet, and you have no idea of the classic grace with which he had arranged the folds about his fine person. We at first thought him a woman, and he himself was in an ecstasy of glee at our mistake.

It is impossible to conceive of anything more light and airy than the step of these people. I shall never forget with what enchanted eyes I gazed upon one of them, gliding along the side of the hill opposite

Missouri Bar. One would fancy that nothing but a fly or a spirit could keep its footing on the rocks along which he stepped so stately, for they looked as perpendicular as a wall. My friend observed that no white man could have done it. This wild creature seemed to move as a cloud moves on a quiet day in summer, and as still and silently. It really made me solemn to gaze upon him, and the sight almost impressed me as something superhuman.

Viewed in the most favorable manner, these poor creatures are miserably brutish and degraded, having very little in common with the lofty and eloquent aborigines of the United States. It is said that their entire language contains but about twenty words. Like all Indians, they are passionately fond of gambling, and will exhibit as much anxiety at the losing or winning of a handful of beans as do their paler brothers when thousands are at stake. Methinks, from what I have seen of that most hateful vice, the *amount* lost or won has very little to do with the matter. But let me not speak of this most detestable of crimes. I have known such frightful consequences to ensue from its indulgence, that I dare not speak of it, lest I use language, as perhaps I have already done, unbecoming a woman's lips.

Hundreds of people have arrived upon our Bar within the last few days; drinking saloons are springing up in every direction; the fluming operations are rapidly progressing, and all looks favorably for a busy and prosperous summer to our industrious miners.

HOME PICTURES.

BY J. S. SWETT.

I REMEMBER the old farm-house,
With dark, unpainted form,
Grown black by long exposure
To wind, and rain, and storm;
The roof was grown with mosses,
The frame-work huge and strong,
Like the ash tree standing near it,
Where birds sang all day long.

I remember, I remember
The tidy little bed
In the old, unfinished chamber,
With the rafters overhead;
The patter of the rain-drops
Was music to my ear
Which lulled me into pleasant dreams
Unbroken by a fear.

I remember the old garden,
When ripe fruit on the ground,
Like apples of Hesperides,
Lay temptingly around;
The blue plums and red cherries,
The pears and currants nice—
Ah! that humble little garden
Was to me a paradise.

I remember the barn and swallows
With white and glossy breasts,
That underneath projecting eaves
In summer built their nests;
They twittered round their dwellings
In ever joyous play,
And lived and loved each other
In cottages of clay.

I remember, I remember
The busy haying-time,
When I heard the mowers whetting
Their scythes in merry chime;
I loved to spread the green grass
And rake the new-made hay,
Or load the rattling hay-carts
At close of summer day.

I remember fields of clover
Like red-waved summer seas,
Where I listened to the music
Of busy bumble-bees;
The dark green Indian cornfields,
With silken tassels fair,
And slender cornstalks bristling
Like lances, in the air.

I remember, I remember
The steep and slippery hill
Where we coasted winter evenings,
Though winds were keen and chill;
We shot like Indian arrows
Upon the crusted snow,
Our toes and fingers freezing,
But our hearts all in a glow.

I remember, and with sadness,
The buoyant heart of youth,
With its ardent soul-aspirings
For manliness and truth.
The memories of boyhood
Come back with smiles and tears,
And I treasure up the pictures
Of my home in early years.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE.

BY J. SWETT.

IN this land of change, which has no past, where there is no existence but in the present, where acquaintances—not friends—come and go, and are forgotten, it is very pleasant in the stillness of the night, when the wearied brain and strong will yield to the warm impulses of the soul, to commune with Memory, and call up old scenes, which, like old songs and familiar faces, grow dearer as they grow older. It is well for the man, whirled about in this turmoil of life, to rejuvenate himself at the pure fountain of childhood's simple pleasures, that he may not become harsh, cold and entirely unsympathizing. The brain may and must soon grow old, but let the heart keep fresh and youthful.

I expect to write nothing new; there are feelings common to all hearts, and best expressed in common words. The rare plant may delight the botanist, but to most is not the simple, every-day flower, that blooms around the door, by far the sweeter?

I look out at the window and see the stars gazing mildly into the silver mirror of the placid bay. I know the same stars are bending as brightly down over the granite hills of my New England home. I am there among the loved ones of early years, in whose presence the heart throbbed as it shall never throb again. My thoughts go back, back into the misty past, till they rest in the old school-house of my native village. There are times when childhood scenes come back with a vividness that is almost startling; when hill, and tree, and brook, and field, and pasture reappear, and the mind flashes and plays like the Aurora over the cloudless sky of boyish existence. Then how the warm feelings of the young heart come gushing up from the choked fountains of the soul! The singing of the birds, the rustle of the leaves, the murmur of the brook, fall not in strains of more exquisite music on the ear of childhood than their recollection on the breast of manhood.

I am a dreamer to-night, and among the thick-coming fancies is the picture of the well-remembered school-house. There it stands, perched on the summit of the "Great Hill." Our good forefathers always located the school-house on a hill-top, doubtless that the scholars might breathe a pure, moral atmosphere, and climb the hill of science from the power of association. Around it spreads the rocky pasture, where in sunny spring-days the blue-eyed violets smiled on the little knolls and hillocks, and eager hands of little bright-eyed girls plucked and pressed them to bosoms as pure and stainless as the flowers themselves. The interior of the house is in keeping with the exterior. Long rows of unpainted desks and benches bear striking evidences of the effect of sharp jackknives in the hands of whittling Yankee "shavers."

How we little urchins used to envy the wonderful skill of the "back-seat" boys in sinking and cutting curious "fly-boxes" in the thick plank of the desks! And how the big boys caught flies from the back windows, and cruelly imprisoned them in the dark cells! And how did one youth, more humane than the rest—he was a *wonderfu*

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CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER EIGHTEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, July 5, 1852.

DEAR M:—Our Fourth of July celebration, which came off at Rich Bar, was quite a respectable affair. I had the honor of making a flag for the occasion. The stripes were formed of cotton cloth and red calico, of which last gorgeous material, no possible place in California is ever destitute. A piece of drilling, taken from the roof of the Humboldt, which the rain and the sun had faded from its original, somber hue, to just that particular shade of blue, which you and I admire so much—served for a Union. A large star in the center, covered with gold leaf, represented California. Humble as were the materials of which it was composed, this banner made quite a gay appearance, floating from the top of a lofty pine, in front of the Empire, to which it was suspended.

I went over to Rich Bar at six in the morning, not wishing to take so fatiguing a walk in the heat of the day. After breakfast, I assisted Mrs. B. and one of the gentlemen, in decorating the dining-room; the walls of which, we completely covered with grape-vines, relieved here and there, with bunches of elder-blow. We made several handsome bouquets, and arranged one of seringas, white lilies and the feathery green of the cedar, to be presented, in the name of the ladies, to the Orator of the Day. You can imagine my disgust, when the ceremony was performed, to observe that some officious Goth, had marred the perfect keeping of the gift, by thrusting into the vase, several ugly, purple blossoms.

The exercises were appointed to commence at ten o'clock, but they were deferred for half an hour, in expectation of the arrival of two ladies, who had taken up their abode in the place within the last six weeks, and were living on Indian Bar Hill. As they did not come, however, it was thought necessary to proceed without them; so Mrs. B. and myself, were obliged to sit upon the piazza of the Empire, comprising in our two persons, the entire female audience.

The scene was indeed striking. The green, garlanded hills girdling Rich Bar, looked wonderfully beautiful, rising with their grand, abrupt outlines into the radiant summer sky. A platform reared in front of the Empire, beneath the banner-tasseled pine, and arched with fragrant fir-boughs, made the prettiest possible rustic rostrum. The audience, grouped beneath the awnings of the different shops, dressed in their colored shirts,—though here and there, one might observe a dandy miner, who had relieved the usual vestment, by placing beneath it one of calico or white muslin—added much to the picturesqueness of the scene. Unfortunately, the Committee of Arrangements had not been able to procure a copy of the Declaration of Independence. Its place

was supplied by an apologetic speech from a Mr. J., who will, without doubt, be the Democratic candidate for State Representative at the coming election. This gentleman finished his performance, by introducing Mr. B., the Orator of the Day, who is the Whig nominee for the abovementioned office. Before pronouncing his Address, Mr. B. read some verses, which he said had been handed to him anonymously, the evening before. I have copied them for your amusement. They are as follows, and are entitled—

“A FOURTH OF JULY WELCOME TO THE MINERS.

Ye are welcome, merry miners! in your blue and red shirts, all!
Ye are welcome, 'mid these golden hills, to your Nation's Festival;
Though ye've not shaved your savage lips, nor cut your barbarous hair—
Ye are welcome, merry miners! all bearded as ye are.

What, though your brows are blushing, at the kisses of the sun,
And your once white and well-kept hands, are stained a sober dun;
What though your backs are bent with toil, and ye have lost the air,
With which ye bowed your stately heads, amid the young and fair,

I fain would in my slender palm your horny fingers clasp,
For I love the hand of honest toil, its firm and heartfelt grasp;
And I know, Oh miners, brave and true! that not alone for self,
Have ye heaped through many wearying months, your glittering pile of pelf.

Ye, of the dark and thoughtful eyes beneath the bronzed brow;
Ye, on whose smooth and rounded cheeks, still gleams youth's purple glow;
Ye, of the reckless, daring life—ye, of the timid glance;
Ho! young and old; Ho! grave and gay, to our Nation's *fête* advance.

Ho! sun-kissed brother from the South, where radiant skies are glowing;
Ho! toiler from the stormy North, where snowy winds are blowing;
Ho! Buckeye, Hoosier, from the West, sons of the river great—
Come shout Columbia's birthday song, in the new Golden State.

Ho! children of imperial France; Ho! Erin's brave and true;
Ho! England's golden bearded race—we fain would welcome you;
And dark-eye'd friends from those glad climes, where Spain's proud blood is seen—
To join in Freedom's holy psalm, ye'll not refuse, I ween.

For now the banner of the free is in *very deed* our own,
And 'mid the brotherhood of States, not ours, the feeblest one.
Then proudly shout, ye bushy men, with throats all brown and bare,
For lo! from 'midst our flag's brave blue, leaps out a *golden* star.

After reading the above lines, Mr. B. pronounced beautifully a very splendid Oration. Unlike such efforts in general, it was exceedingly fresh and new; so that instead of its being that infliction that Fourth of July Orations commonly are, it was a high pleasure to listen to him. Perhaps, where Nature herself is so original, it is impossible for even thought to be hackneyed. It is too long for a letter, but as the miners have requested a copy for publication, I will send it to you in print.

About half an hour after the close of the Oration, the ladies from the hill arrived. They made a pretty picture descending the steep, the one with her wealth of floating curls turbaned in a snowy nubie, and her white dress set off by a crimson scarf; the other, with a little Pamela hat, placed coquettishly upon her brown, braided tresses, and a magnificent Chinese shawl enveloping her slender figure. So lately arrived from the States, with everything fresh and new, they quite extinguished poor Mrs. B. and myself, trying our best to look fashionable in our antique mode of four years ago.

The dinner was excellent. We had a real, live Captain, a very gentlemanly person, who had actually been in action during the Mexican

War, for president. Many of the toasts were quite spicy and original ; one of the new ladies sang three or four beautiful songs, and everything passed off at Rich Bar quite respectably. To be sure, there was a small fight in the bar-room—which is situated just below the dining-room—during which much speech and a little blood were spouted ; whether the latter catastrophe was caused by a blow received, or the large talking of the victim, is not known. Two peacefully inclined citizens who, at the first battle-shout, had rushed manfully to the rescue, returned at the subsiding of hostilities with blood-bespattered shirt-bosoms ; at which fearful sight, the pretty wearer of the Pamella hat—one of the delinquents being her husband—chose to go faint, and would not finish her dinner, which, as we saw that her distress was real, somewhat marred our enjoyment.

On our way home, half a dozen gentlemen, who preceded us, stepped in front of a cabin, full of “Infant Phenomena,” and gave nine cheers for “the mother and her children ;” which will show what a rarity those embodiments of noise and disquiet are in the mountains. This group of pretty darlings consists of three sweet little girls, slender, straight, and white as ivory wands, moving with an incessant and *staccato* (do you remember our old music lessons ?) activity, which always makes me think of my humming birds.

About five o'clock, we arrived at home, just in time to hear some noisy shouts of “Down with the Spaniards ;” “The great American People forever,” and other similar cries, evident signs of quite a spirited fight between the two parties, which was, in reality, taking place at the moment. Seven or eight of the *elite* of Rich Bar, drunk with whisky and patriotism, were the principal actors in this unhappy affair, which resulted in serious injury to two or three Spaniards. For some time past, there has been a gradually increasing state of bad feeling exhibited by our countrymen (increased, we fancy, by the ill-treatment which our Consul received the other day at Acapulco,) towards foreigners. In this affair, our own countrymen were principally to blame, or, rather I should say, Sir Barley Corn was to blame, for many of the ringleaders are fine young men, who, when sober, are decidedly friendly to the Spaniards. It is feared that this will not be the end of the fracas, though the more intelligent foreigners, as well as the judicious Americans, are making every effort to promote kindly feeling between the two nations. This will be very difficult, on account of the ignorant prejudices of the low-bred, which class are a large proportion of both parties.

It is very common to hear vulgar Yankees say of the Spaniards, “Oh, they are half-civilized black men !” These unjust expressions naturally irritate the latter, many of whom are highly educated gentlemen of the most refined and cultivated manners. We labor under great disadvantages, in the judgment of foreigners. Our peculiar, political institutions, and the prevalence of common schools, give to *all* our people an arrogant assurance, which is mistaken for the American *beau ideal* of a gentleman.

They are unable to distinguish those nice *shades* of manner, which as effectually separate the gentleman from the clown with *us*, as do these

broader lines, which mark these two classes among all other nations. They think that it is the grand characteristic of Columbia's children, to be prejudiced, opinionated, selfish, avaricious and unjust. It is vain to tell them, that such are not specimens of American gentlemen. They will answer, "They call themselves gentlemen, and you receive them in your houses as such." It is utterly impossible for foreigners to thoroughly comprehend and make due allowance for that want of delicacy, and that vulgar "I'm as good as you are," spirit, which is, it must be confessed, peculiar to the lower classes of our people, and which would lead the majority of them to—

"Enter a palace with their old felt hat on—
To address the King with the title of Mister,
And ask him the price of the throne he sat on."

The class of men who rule society (?) in the mines, are the gamblers who, for the most part, are reckless, bad men, although no doubt there are many among them, whose only vice is that fatal love of play. The rest of the people are afraid of these daring, unprincipled persons, and when they commit the most glaring injustice against the Spaniards, it is generally passed unnoticed.

We have had innumerable drunken fights during the summer, with the usual amount of broken heads, collar bones, stabs, etc. Indeed, the sabbaths are almost always enlivened by some such merry event. Were it not for these affairs, I might sometimes forget that the sweet day of rest was shining down upon us.

Last week, the dead body of a Frenchman was found in the river, near Missouri Bar. On examination of the body, it was the general opinion that he had been murdered. Suspicion has, as yet, fallen upon no person.

REST.

BY A WEARY ONE.

Rest for the weary man
Whose sinews stout and strong,
Are worn by the iron ban
Of poverty and wrong.
Rest for the brawny hand
Of muscle and of bone;
Rest for the toil-worn band,
Where rest is seldom known.

Rest for the iron will,
That has struggled hard with fate,
And is fighting fiercely still
For success, to come too late!
Rest from exhausting strife,
Rest from the bitter scorn,
That would make misfortune's life
The life of a bondman born.

They say that a manly heart,
Should fight till the latest breath—
That never a string should start,
Till the life-blood cools in death;
Go, barter the soul for gold,
And act the remorseless knave—
It were better to mammon sold,
Than become *misfortune's* slave!

There is no such word as *fail*!
And *labor* hath its meed,
Is the rich man's mocking tale
To his fellow-men in need.
Success is the mighty king,
To which the many kneel,
While honest failures bring
Contempt and a damning seal.

Does not the freeman lie
Crushed down by the tyrant's heel?
And the fallen patriot die,
Beneath the oppressor's steel!
Not alone on the weak and frail,
Do the storms of fate come down,
But the noblest heroes fall
In misfortune's sullen frown.

My morning and evening prayer
Is for sleep that knows no waking,
Relief from this cheerless care,
When the heart shall *cease* from breaking.
O God! for one hour of rest
Like that of my early years,
When rocked on my mother's breast,
She kissed away my tears.

He sees gaunt famine coming from afar,
 And makes provision for her gnawing tooth;
 From Nilus' banks to Canaan's distant shore,
 In the sweet spirit of fraternal ruth,
 He sends to save the hungry sons of Truth;
 In after days when they have numerous grown,
 He slays their infants and enslaves their youth;
 And when Heaven leads them forth, he follows on,
 Till in returning floods his hosts are overthrown.

He groweth wise, and rich, and vastly great;
 His scepter swayeth to the distant sea;
 All nations praise the glory of his state,—
 And Sheba's Queen proclaims his majesty;
 His works declare his unique piety.
 On Zion's holy mount, with untold treasure,
 He rears a temple to the Deity,
 Divine in structure, beauty, wealth and measure;
 Then in strange woman's love he finds his rarest pleasure.

He soareth to the pinnacle of fame;
 His glory gloweth like unclouded noon;
 Unnumbered millions tremble at his name,
 His smile is courted as the richest boon,
 His frown more dreaded than the fell Simoon;
 His lofty palaces all thought surpass;
 His throne excels the sheen of sun and moon;
 All these, saith he, my power did amass;
 Thus vieth he with God;—then like an ox eats grass.

While yet the bloom of youth is on his cheek,
 He nobly mounts his Father's ancient throne;
 He conquers, elevates, unites the Greek:—
 Kingdoms of yore with glory overgrown,
 Quelled by his glance, are quickly overthrown.
 From conquering unto conquest forth he flies;
 With thrones, crowns, scepters, his meteor path is strewn!
 His banner waves o'er all beneath the skies,
 Then, in a midnight revel, ingloriously he dies.

Unfolding the strong pinions of his soul,
 Man soars with Science through her vast domain;
 He wreathes a lightning garland round each pole;
 Doth analyze the dust, light, darkness, rain,—
 Extends the triumphs of his mental reign;
 Tells how the hoary frost and ice have birth;
 Weighs planets;—suns;—the Pleiades restrains;—
 He guides Arcturus,—looseth Orion's girth;—
 Then sinks into the grave like a vile thing of earth!

Vain man! his lofty intellect may scan
 Creation's grandeur and immensity;
 His soul, the idea of the Godhead span,
 As oft it yearns for immortality!
 His heart throb wildly with Love's ecstasy!
 His fancy revel in her own creations,
 Fairer than fields Elysian e'er can be;
 Then, like a slave, his stomach's least vibration,
 Hurls the poor mortal down from his proud elevation.

How grave a contradiction is poor man!
 His days all numbered and his years all told
 Form but a brief, uncertain, dwindling span.
 A babe,—a youth—of age—already old—
 Fainting with heat and freezing with the cold!
 The child of deep and dark adversity,
 He wastes his life in toil for bread and gold!
 The slave of passion, boasting he is free,—
 A riddle to himself, to his race a mystery!

If this is man, how foolish is his pride?
 Wealth, honor, glory, but a fitful gleam!
 A drop, exhaled from earth, doth fall and glide
 An undistinguished atom in the stream
 Which sweeps away to ocean! So, Life's dream
 Flows on and mingles with Eternity!
 Eternity! I cannot grasp that theme!
 Frail barque of Life drive on o'er Time's dark sea,
 The hand which launched thee forth, controls thy destiny!

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

LETTER NINETEENTH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, August 4, 1852.

WE have lived through so much of excitement for the last three weeks, dear M., that I almost shrink from relating the gloomy events which have marked their flight. But if I leave out the darker shades of our mountain life, the picture will be very incomplete. In the short space of twenty-four days, we have had murders, fearful accidents, bloody deaths, a mob, whippings, a hanging, an attempt at suicide, and a fatal duel. But to begin at the beginning, as according to rule one ought to do.

I think that even among these beautiful hills, I never saw a more perfect "bridal of the earth and sky," than that of Sunday the eleventh of July. On that morning, I went with a party of friends to the head of the "Ditch," a walk of about three miles in length. I do not believe that Nature herself ever made anything so lovely, as this artificial brooklet. It glides like a living thing, through the very heart of the forest; sometimes creeping softly on, as though with muffled feet, through a wilderness of aquatic plants; sometimes dancing gaily over a white pebbled bottom; now making a "sunshine in a shady place," across the mossy roots of the majestic old trees—and anon leaping with a grand anthem, adown the great, solemn rocks, which lie along its beautiful pathway. A sunny opening at the head of the ditch, is a garden of perfumed shrubbery and many-tinted flowers—all garlanded with the prettiest vines imaginable, and peopled with an infinite variety of magnificent butterflies. These last were of every possible color—pink, blue and yellow, shining black splashed with orange, purple fleshed with gold, white, and even green. We returned about three in the evening, loaded with fragrant bundles, which arranged in jars, tumblers, pitcher, bottles and pails, (we are not particular as to the quality of our vases in the mountains, and love our flowers as well in their humble chalices as if their beautiful heads lay against a back-ground of marble or porcelain,) made the dark old cabin, "a bower of beauty for us."

Shortly after our arrival, a perfectly deafening volley of shouts and yells elicited from my companion the careless remark, "that the customary Sabbath-day's fight was apparently more seriously than usual." Almost as he spoke, there succeeded a death-like silence, broken in a minute after by a deep groan, at the corner of the cabin, followed by the words, "Why Tom, poor fellow, are you really wounded?" Before we could reach the door, it was burst violently open, by a person who inquired hurriedly for the Doctor—who, luckily, happened at that very moment to be approaching. The man who called him, then gave us the following excited account of what had happened. He said that in

a *melé* between the Americans and the foreigners, Domingo—a tall, majestic-looking Spaniard, a perfect type of the novelistic bandit of Old Spain—had stabbed Tom Somers, a young Irishman, but a naturalized citizen of the United States—and that at the very moment, said Domingo, with a *Mejicana* hanging upon his arm, and brandishing threateningly the long, bloody knife with which he had inflicted the wound upon his victim, was parading up and down the street unmolested. It seems that when Tom Somers fell, the Americans, being unarmed, were seized with a sudden panic and fled. There was a rumor, (unfounded, as it afterwards proved) to the effect, that the Spaniards had on this day conspired to kill all the Americans on the river. In a few moments, however, the latter rallied and made a rush at the murderer, who immediately plunged into the river and swam across to Missouri Bar; eight or ten shots were fired at him while in the water, not one of which hit him. He ran like an antelope across the flat, swam thence to Smith's Bar, and escaped by the road leading out of the mountains, from the Junction. Several men went in pursuit of him, but he was not taken, and without doubt, is now safe in Mexico.

In the meanwhile, the consternation was terrific. The Spaniards, who, with the exception of six or eight, knew no more of the affair than I did, thought that the Americans had arisen against them; and our own countryman equally ignorant, fancied the same of the foreigners. About twenty of the latter, who were either sleeping or reading in their cabins at the time of the *emeute*, aroused by the cry of "Down with the Spaniards!" barricaded themselves in a drinking-saloon, determined to defend themselves as long as possible, against the massacre, which was fully expected would follow this appalling shout. In the bake-shop, which stands next door to our cabin, young Tom Somers lay straitened for the grave, (he lived but fifteen minutes after he was wounded,) while over his dead body a Spanish woman, was weeping and moaning in the most piteous and heart-rending manner. The Rich Barians, who had heard a most exaggerated account of the rising of the Spaniards against the Americans, armed with rifles, pistols, clubs, dirks, etc., were rushing down the hill by hundreds. Each one added fuel to his rage, by crowding into the little bakery, to gaze upon the blood-bathed bosom of the victim, yet warm with the life, which but an hour before it had so triumphantly worn. Then arose the most fearful shouts of "Down with the Spaniards!" "Drive every foreigner off the river!" "Don't let one of the murderous devils remain." "Oh, if you have a drop of American blood in your veins, it must cry out for vengeance upon the cowardly assassins of poor Tom." All this, mingled with the most horrible oaths and execrations, yelled up, as if in mockery, into that smiling heaven, which in its fair Sabbath calm, bent unmoved over the hell which was raging below.

After a time, the more sensible and sober part of the community succeeding in quieting, in a partial degree, the enraged and excited multitude. During the whole affair I had remained perfectly calm, in truth, much more so than I am now, when recalling it. The entire catastrophe had been so unexpected, and so sudden in its consumma-

tion, that I fancy I was stupefied into the most exemplary good behavior. F. and several of his friends, taking advantage of the lull in the storm, came into the cabin and entreated me to join the two women who were living on the hill. At this time, it seemed to be the general opinion, that there would be a serious fight, and they said I might be wounded accidentally, if I remained on the Bar. As I had no fear of anything of the kind, I plead hard to be allowed to stop, but when told that my presence would increase the anxiety of our friends, of course, like a dutiful wife, I went on to the hill.

We three women, left entirely alone, seated ourselves upon a log, overlooking the strange scene below. The Bar, was a sea of heads, bristling with guns, rifles and clubs. We could see nothing, but fancied from the apparent quiet of the crowd, that the miners were taking measures to investigate the sad event of the day. All at once, we were startled by the firing of a gun, and the next moment, the crowd dispersing, we saw a man led into the log cabin, while another was carried, apparently lifeless, into a Spanish drinking-saloon, from one end of which, were burst off instantly several boards, evidently to give air to the wounded person. Of course, we were utterly unable to imagine what had happened; and to all our perplexity and anxiety, one of the ladies insisted upon believing that it was her own husband who had been shot, and as she is a very nervous woman, you can fancy our distress. It was in vain to tell her—which we did over and over again—that that worthy individual wore a *blue* shirt, and the wounded person a *red* one; she doggedly insisted that her dear M. had been shot, and having informed us confidentially and rather inconsistently that “she should never see him again, never, never,” plumped herself down upon the log in an attitude of calm and ladylike despair, which would have been infinitely amusing, had not the occasion been so truly a fearful one. Luckily for our nerves, a benevolent individual, taking pity upon our loneliness, came and told us what had happened.

It seems that an Englishman, the owner of a house of the vilest description, a person, who is said to have been the primary cause of all the troubles of the day, attempted to force his way through the line of armed men which had been formed at each side of the street. The guard very properly refused to let him pass. In his drunken fury, he tried to wrest a gun from one of them, which being accidentally discharged in the struggle, inflicted a severe wound upon a Mr. Oxley, and shattered in the most dreadful manner the thigh of Señor Pizarro, a man of high birth and breeding, a *porteño* of Buenos Ayres. This frightful accident recalled the people to their senses, and they began to act a little less like madmen, than they had previously done. They elected a Vigilance Committee, and authorized persons to go to the Junction and arrest the suspected Spaniards.

The first act of the Committee was to try a *Mejicana*, who had been foremost in the fray. She has always worn male attire, and on this occasion, armed with a pair of pistols, she fought like a very fury. Luckily, inexperienced in the use of fire-arms, she wounded no one. She was sentenced to leave the Bar by day-light, a perfectly just decision, for there is no doubt that she is a regular little demon.

Some went so far as to say, she ought to be hung, for she was the *indirect* cause of the fight. You see always, it is the old, cowardly excuse of Adam in Paradise: "The *woman* tempted me, and I did eat." As if the poor, frail head, once so pure and beautiful, had not sin enough of its own, dragging it forever downward, without being made to answer for the wrong-doing of a whole community of men.

The next day, the Committee tried five or six Spaniards, who were proven to have been the ringleaders in the Sabbath-day riot. Two of them were sentenced to be whipped, the remainder to leave the Bar that evening; the property of all to be confiscated to the use of the wounded persons. Oh Mary! imagine my anguish when I heard the first blow fall upon those wretched men. I had never thought that I should be compelled to hear such fearful sounds, and, although I immediately buried my head in a shawl, nothing can efface from memory the disgust and horror of that moment. I had heard of such things, but heretofore had not realized, that in the nineteenth century, men could be beaten like dogs, much less that other men, not only could sentence such barbarism, but could actually stand by and see their own manhood degraded in such disgraceful manner. One of these unhappy persons was a very gentlemanly young Spaniard, who implored for death in the most moving terms. He appealed to his judges in the most eloquent manner—as gentlemen, as men of honor; representing to them that to be deprived of life, was nothing in comparison with the never-to-be-effaced stain of the vilest convict's punishment—to which they had sentenced him. Finding all his entreaties disregarded, he swore a most solemn oath, that he would murder every American that he should chance to meet alone, and as he is a man of the most dauntless courage, and rendered desperate by a burning sense of disgrace, which will cease only with his life, he will doubtless keep his word.

Although in my very humble opinion and in that of others more competent to judge of such matters than myself, these sentences were unnecessarily severe, yet so great was the rage and excitement of the crowd, that the Vigilance Committee could do no less. The mass of the mob demanded fiercely the death of the prisoners, and it was evident that many of the Committee took side with the people. I shall never forget how horror-struck I was (bombastic as it *now* sounds) at hearing no less a personage than the Whig candidate for representative say, "that the condemned had better fly for their lives, for the Avenger of Blood was on their tracks!" I am happy to say, that said very worthy, but sanguinary individual, "The Avenger of Blood!" represented in this case by some half dozen gambling rowdies, either changed his mind or lost scent of his prey; for the intended victims slept about two miles up the hill, quite peacefully until morning.

The following facts, elicited upon the trial, throw light upon this unhappy affair: Seven miners from Old Spain, enraged at the cruel treatment which their countrymen had received on the "Fourth," and at the illiberal cry of "Down with the Spaniard," had united for the purpose of taking revenge on seven Americans whom they believed to be the originators of their insults. All well armed, they came from

the Junction, where they were residing at the time, intending to challenge each one his man, and in fair fight, compel their insolent aggressors to answer for the arrogance which they had exhibited more than once towards the Spanish race. Their first move on arriving at Indian Bar was to go and dine at the Humboldt, where they drank a most enormous quantity of champagne and claret. Afterwards, they proceeded to the house of the Englishman, whose brutal carelessness caused the accident which wounded Pizarro and Oxley, when one of them commenced a playful conversation with one of his countrywomen. This enraged the Englishman, who instantly struck the Spaniard a violent blow, and ejected him from the shanty. Thereupon ensued a spirited fight, which, through the exertion of a gentleman from Chili, a favorite with both nations, ended without bloodshed. This person knew nothing of the intended duel, or he might have prevented, by his wise counsels, what followed. Not suspecting for a moment anything of the kind, he went to Rich Bar. Soon after he left, Tom Somers, who is said always to have been a dangerous person when in liquor, without any apparent provocation, struck Domingo, (one of the original seven) a violent blow, which nearly felled him to the earth. The latter, a man of "dark antecedents" and the most reckless character, mad with wine, rage and revenge, without an instant's pause, drew his knife and inflicted a fatal wound upon his insulter. Thereupon followed the chapter of accidents which I have related.

On Tuesday following the fatal Sabbath, a man brought the news of the murder of a Mr. Bacon, a person well known on the river, who kept a ranch about twelve miles from Rich Bar. He was killed for his money, by his servant, a negro, who not three months ago was our own cook. He was the last one anybody would have suspected capable of such an act.

A party of men, appointed by the Vigilance Committee, left the Bar immediately in search of him. The miserable wretch was apprehended in Sacramento and part of the gold found upon his person. On the following Sunday he was brought in chains to Rich Bar. After a trial by the miners, he was sentenced to be hung at four o'clock in the evening. All efforts to make him confess proved futile. He said, very truly, that whether innocent or guilty, they would hang him; and so he "died and made no sign," with a calm indifference, as the novelists say, "worthy of a better cause." The dreadful crime and death of "Josh," who having been an excellent cook, and very neat and respectful, was a favorite servant with us, added to the unhappiness which you can easily imagine that I was suffering under all these horrors.

On Saturday evening about eight o'clock, as we sat quietly conversing with the two ladies from the hill—who, by the way, we found very agreeable additions to our society, hitherto composed entirely of gentlemen—we were startled by the loud shouting, and rushing close by the door of the cabin, which stood open, of three or four hundred men. Of course, we females, with nerves somewhat shattered from the events of the past week, were greatly alarmed.

We were soon informed that Henry Cook, *vice* "Josh" had, in a fit of delirium tremens, cut his throat from ear to ear. The poor wretch was alone when he committed the desperate deed, and in his madness, throwing the bloody razor upon the ground, he ran part of the way up the hill. Here he was found almost senseless, and brought back to the Humboldt, where he was very nearly the cause of hanging poor "Paganini Ned"—who returned a few weeks since from the valley,—for his first act on recovering himself, was to accuse that culinary individual of having attempted to murder him. The mob were for hanging one poor "Vattel" without judge or jury, and it was only through the most strenuous exertions of his friends, that the life of this illustrious person was saved. Poor Ned! it was forty-eight hours before his cork-screws returned to their original graceful curl; he threatens to leave us to our barbarism and no longer to waste his culinary talents upon an ungrateful and inappreciative people. He has sworn "war to the knife" against Henry, who was formerly his most intimate friend, as nothing can persuade him that the accusation did not proceed from the purest malice on the part of the suicide.

Their majesties the mob, with that beautiful consistency which usually distinguishes those august individuals, insisted upon shooting poor Harry—for said they, and the reasoning is remarkably conclusive and clear, "a man so hardened as to raise his hand against his *own* life, will never hesitate to murder another!" They almost mobbed F. for binding up the wounds of the unfortunate wretch and for saying that it was possible he might live. At last, however, they compromised the matter, by determining, that if Henry should recover, he should leave the Bar immediately. Neither contingency will probably take place, as it will be almost a miracle if he survives.

On the day following the attempted suicide, which was Sunday, nothing more exciting happened than a fight and the half-drowning of a drunken individual in the river, just in front of the Humboldt.

On Sunday last, the thigh of Señor Pizarro was amputated; but alas, without success. He had been sick for many months with chronic dysentery, which after the operation returned with great violence, and he died at two o'clock on Monday morning with the same calm and lofty resignation which had distinguished him during his illness. When first wounded, believing his case hopeless, he had decidedly refused to submit to amputation, but as time wore on he was persuaded to take this one chance for his life, for the sake of his daughter, a young girl of fifteen, at present at school in a convent in Chili, whom his death leaves without any near relation. I saw him several times during his illness, and it was melancholy indeed, to hear him talk of his motherless girl who, I have been told, is extremely beautiful, talented and accomplished.

The state of society here has never been so bad as since the appointment of a Committee of Vigilance. The rowdies have formed themselves into a company called the "Moguls," and they parade the streets all night, howling, shouting, breaking into houses, taking wearied miners out of their beds and throwing them into the river, and in short, "murdering sleep," in the most remorseless manner. Nearly

every night they build bonfires fearfully near some rag shanty, thus endangering the lives, (or I should rather say the property—for as it is impossible to sleep, lives are emphatically safe) of the whole community. They retire about five o'clock in the morning; previously to this blessed event posting notices to that effect, and that they will throw any one who may disturb them into the river. I am nearly worn out for want of rest, for truly they "make night hideous" with their fearful uproar. Mr. O——, who still lies dangerously ill from the wound received, on what we call the "fatal Sunday," complains bitterly of the disturbance; and when poor Pizarro was dying, and one of his friends gently requested that they would be quiet for half an hour and permit the soul of the sufferer to pass in peace, they only laughed and yelled and hooted louder than ever, in the presence of the departing spirit, for the tenement in which he lay, being composed of green boughs only, could of course shut out no sounds. Without doubt if the "Moguls" had been sober, they would never have been guilty of such horrible barbarity as to compel the thoughts of a dying man to mingle with curses and blasphemies; but alas! they were intoxicated, and may God forgive them, unhappy ones, for they knew not what they did. The poor, exhausted miners, for even well people cannot sleep in such a pandemonium, grumble and complain, but they—although far outnumbering the rioters—are too timid to resist. All say "It is shameful; something ought to be done; something *must* be done," etc. and in the mean time the rioters triumph. You will wonder that the Committee of Vigilance does not interfere; it is said that some of that very Committee are the ringleaders among the "Moguls."

I believe I have related to you everything but the duel—and I will make the recital of this as short as possible, for I am sick of these sad subjects, and doubt not but you are the same. It took place on Tuesday morning at eight o'clock, on Missouri Bar, when and where that same Englishman who has figured so largely in my letter, shot his best friend. The duelists were surrounded by a large crowd, I have been told, foremost among which stood the Committee of Vigilance! The man who received his dear friend's fatal shot, was one of the most quiet and peaceable citizens on the Bar. He lived about ten minutes after he was wounded. He was from Ipswich, England, and only twenty-five years of age, when his own high passions snatched him from life. In justice to his opponent, it must be said, that he would willingly have retired after the first shots had been exchanged, but poor Billy Leggett, as he was familiarly called, insisted upon having the distance between them shortened, and continuing the duel until one of them had fallen.

There, my dear M., have I not fulfilled my promise of giving you a dish of horrors? And only think of such a shrinking, timid, frail thing, as I *used* to be "long time ago," not only living right in the midst of them, but almost compelled to hear if not see the whole. I think that I may without vanity affirm, that I have "seen the elephant." "Did you see his tail?" asks innocent Ada J., in her mother's letter. Yes, sweet Ada, the "entire Animal" has been exhibited to my view.

“But you must remember, that this is California,” as the new comers are so fond of informing *us*! who consider ourselves “one of the oldest inhabitants” of the golden State.

And now dear M., *A Dios*. Be thankful that you are living in the beautiful quiet of beautiful A., and give up “hankering arter” (as you know what dear creature says—) California, for believe me, this coarse, barbarous life would suit you, even less than it does your sister.

THE WORLD IS BEAUTIFUL.

—
BY G.

The world is beautiful! I care not if
Cold speculators call its gladness, grief,
Its pleasant shining valleys, vales of tears,—
Their dogmas cannot alter my belief.

The world is beautiful! would I could see
It traveling with her sister orbs of light,
And hear the rushing of its ponderous form
Swift coursing in its never ending flight.

The world is beautiful! though I am blind
Unto its radiant track through arching space,
And cannot hear the music of its march,
Nor look from Heaven upon its sparkling face.

The world is beautiful! for it was made
By One who fashioned all things for the best,
And symmetry and fitness gave to all,
From ocean's basin to a linnet's nest.

The world is beautiful! and even man,
Though fallen from the splendor of his birth,
May see its charms, and with a sinless heart
Enjoy the pleasures God has giv'n to Earth.

TO J. M. R.

—
BY NETSAM.

As ships, night-sailing o'er the summer sea,
Leave starry pathways on the restless waves,
So on my heart, which beating restlessly,
Longingly waits the happiness it craves,
Thy memory passing oft, fair paths has made,
Starred with bright hopes, which cannot dim nor fade.

And thus upon my sight I see thee rise,
Embodiment of all my life's young dreams;
I read the meaning in thy dark'ning eyes;
I know thy thoughts, as pure as mountain streams,
In which the miner seeks with eager eyes,
And finds in golden sands the wished-for prize.

The prize I strive for, thou; do fair dreams fade
As wearily I climb Nevada's side;
Or faint with toil, with rocker and with spade,
I search within the golden river's tide;
I hear thy voice, my strength springs up anew,
Home lies before me, home—our home and thou.

SCIENTIFIC.

ON THE GROOVING AND POLISHING OF HARD ROCKS AND MINERALS BY DRY SAND.*

BY WILLIAM P. BLAKE, U. S. GEOLOGIST.

THE phenomena, about to be described, were observed in the pass of San Bernardino, (California,) in 1853. † This pass is one of the principal breaks through the southern prolongation of the Sierra Nevada, and connects the Pacific slope with the broad and low interior plain of the Colorado Desert. It is bounded on each side by high mountains; the peak of San Bernardino rising on the north to the height of about 8,500 feet, and San Gorgonio, on the south to about 7,000. The elevation of the summit level is 2,808 feet above the Pacific, and the width of the gap at that point is about two miles; from this the ground slopes each way very gradually, the grade or descent on the east, for about twenty-eight miles, being on an average sixty-nine feet per mile.

On this eastern declivity of the pass—the side turned towards the desert, the granite and associate rocks, which form the sharp peak of San Gorgonio, extend down to the valley of the pass in a succession of sharp ridges, which being devoid of soil and of vegetation stand out in bold and rugged outlines against the clear, unclouded sky of that desert region.

It was on these projecting spurs of San Gorgonio, that the phenomena of grooving were seen. The whole surface of the granite, over broad spaces, was cut into long and perfectly parallel grooves and little furrows, and every portion of it was beautifully smoothed, and though very uneven, had a fine polish.

For a moment, it was impossible to realize the cause of all this abrasion—performed in a manner so peculiar; the action of glaciers and drift was thought of in succession; but the appearance of the surface was so entirely different from that of rocks, which have been acted on by these agents, that I could not regard them as the cause. While contemplating these curious effects, the solution of the problem was presented. The wind was blowing very hard, and carried with it numerous little grains of sand. When I stooped down and glanced over the surface of the rocks, I saw that they were enveloped in an atmosphere of moving sand, which was passing over and accumulating in deep banks and drifts on the lee side

* Communicated to the California Academy of Natural Sciences, by W. P. BLAKE, and read at the Meeting of June 15, 1855, by Dr. C. F. WINSLOW.

† A brief notice of these phenomena is given in the writer's Preliminary Geological Report, accompanying the Report of Lieut. R. S. WILLIAMSON, of a reconnoissance in California. (House Doc. 129, p. 27; Washington, 1855.)

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER TWENTIETH.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, Sept. 4, 1852

IF I could coax some good-natured fairy, or some mischievous Puck, to borrow for me the pen of Grace Greenwood, Fanny Forester, or Nathaniel Willis, I might be able to weave my stupid nothings into one of those airy fabrics, the value of which depends entirely upon the skillful work—or, rather penmanship—which distinguishes it. I have even fancied, that if I could steal a feather from the living opal, swinging like a jeweled pendulum from the heart of the great tiger-lily, which nods its turbaned head so stately within the musquito net-cage standing upon the little table—my poor lines would gather a certain beauty from the rainbow-tinted quill, with which I might trace them. But as there is nobody magician enough, to go out and shoot a fairy or a brownie, and bind it by sign and spell to do my bidding, and as I have strong doubts whether my coarse fingers would be able to manage the delicate pen of a humming-bird, even if I could have the heart to rob my only remaining pet of its brilliant feathers, I am fain to be content with one of “Gillott’s Best,” no ; of “C. R. Sheton’s Extra Fine,” although certain that the sentences following its hard-stroke will be as stiff as itself. If they were only as bright, one might put up with the want of grace ; but, to be stiff and stupid both, is *too* provoking, is it not, Dear M. ? However, what must be, must be ; and as I have nothing to write about, and do not possess the skill to make that nothing graceful, and as you will fret yourself into a scold if you do not receive the usual amount of inked pages at the usual time—why, of course, I am bound to act (my first appearance on *any* stage, I flatter myself in *that* character—) the very original part of the *bore*, and you must prepare to be bored with what philosophy you may.

But without further preface, I will begin with one of the nothings. A few days after the death of the unfortunate Spaniard, related in my last letter, a large log, felled by some wickedly-careless woodman, rolled down from one of the hills, and so completely extinguished the little *Ramara*, in which our poor friend lay at the time of his death, that you would never have imagined from the heap of broken branches which remain, that it had once been a “local habitation,” with such a pretty “name.” Providentially, at the time of the accident, none of those who had been in the habit of stopping there, were within. If Señor Pizarro had survived the amputation of his leg, it would only have been to suffer a still more terrible death,—an accident, which would have deepened, if possible, the gloom which we have suffered during the melancholy summer.

There has been another murder committed within a few miles of this place, which has given us something to gossip about ; for the Committee of Vigilance had the good-nature, purely for our amusement I conclude, to apprehend a lucky individual, (I call him *lucky* advisedly ; for he had all his expenses paid at the Humboldt—was remunerated for his lost time—enjoyed a holiday from hard work—had a sort of guard-of-honor, composed of the most respectable men on the River—and was of more consequence for four days, than ever he had been in the whole of his insignificant little life before ;) whom somebody fancied bore a faint resemblance to the description of the murderer. This interesting lion—I was so fortunate as to catch a glimpse of him one morning, and am convinced that he “would have roared you like any sucking dove,” was fully cleared from the suspected crime ; and if before his acquittal, one might have fancied from the descriptions of his countenance, that none but that of Mephistopheles, in the celebrated picture of the Game of Life, could equal its terrific malignity, after accounts drew it a very St. John’s, for sweet serenity of expression ; what was then called sullenness, now took the name of resignation, and stupidity was quiet contempt. Indeed, I began to fear that they would give him a public triumph, and invite me to make the flag with which to grace it. I confess that I would almost have voted him a procession myself, in gratitude for the amusement which he had given us. However, the Committee were contented with making him a handsome apology and present, and paying his expenses at the Humboldt. Oh, public opinion in the Mines, thou art in truth a *cruel* thing, but at the same time, thank God, most *fickle* !

The other day, we were invited by a Spanish friend to breakfast, at a garden situated half a mile from the Junction, and owned by another Spaniard. It was a lovely morning, in the latter part of August, and as we started about six o’clock, the walk was a most delightful one. The River, filled with flumes, dams, etc., and crowded with busy miners, was as much altered from its old appearance, as if an earthquake had frightened it from its propriety.

I suppose that you are quite worn out with descriptions of walks, and I will spare you this once. I will not tell you, how sometimes we were stepping lightly over immense rocks, which, a few months since, lay fathoms deep beneath the foaming Plumas ; nor how sometimes we were walking high above the bed of the river, from flume to flume, across a board, connecting the two ; nor, how now we were scrambling over the roots of the up-turned trees, and now jumping tiny rivulets ; nor shall I say a single word about the dizziness we felt, as we crept by the deep excavations lying along the road, nor of the beautiful walk at the side of the wing-dam, (it differs from a common dam, in dividing the river lengthways instead of across,) the glittering water rising bluely, almost to a level with the path. I do not think that I will ever tell you about the *impromptu* bath which one of the party took, by tumbling accidentally into the river, as he was walking gallantly behind us ; which, said bath, made him decidedly disagree in our enthusiastic opinion of the loveliness of the promenade.

No ; I shall not say a single word upon any of these subjects, but

leave them all to your vivid imagination. Cork-screws could not draw a solitary sentence from me, now that I have made up my mind to silence. But, I *will* tell you about the "driftings" in the side of the hill, which we visited on our way—not so much from a precious desire of enlightening your pitiable ignorance upon such subjects, you poor little, untraveled Yankee woman! but to prove to you, that having fathomed the depths of "shafts," and threaded the mazes of "Coyote Holes," I intend to astonish the weak nerves of stay-at-homes—if I ever return to New England—by talking learnedly on such subjects, as "one having authority."

These particular "claims," consist of three galleries, lying about eighty feet beneath the summit of the hill, and have already been "drifted" from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet into its side. They are about five feet in height, slightly arched, the sides and roof formed of rugged rocks, dripping with moisture as if sweating beneath the great weight above. Lights are placed at regular distances along these galleries to assist the miners in their work, and boards laid on the wet ground to make a convenient path for the wheelbarrows which convey the dirt and sand to the river, for the purpose of washing it. Wooden beams are placed here and there, to lessen the danger of caving in; but I must confess, that in spite of this precaution, I was first haunted with a horrible feeling of insecurity. As I became reassured, I repeated loudly those glorious lines of Mrs. Hemans, commencing with—

"For the strength of the hills, we bless thee;
Our God, our Fathers' God!"

And a strange echo the gray rocks sent back; as if the mine-demons, those ugly gnomes, which German legends tell us, work forever in the bowels of the earth, were shouting my words in mockery from the dim depths beyond.

These "claims" have paid remarkably well, and if they hold out as they have commenced, the owners will gather a small fortune from their Summer's work.

There is nothing which impresses me more strangely than the fluming operations. The idea of a mighty river being taken up in a wooden trough, turned from the old channel, along which it has foamed for centuries, perhaps, its bed excavated many feet in depth, and itself restored to its old home in the fall, these things strike me as almost a blasphemy against Nature. And then the idea of men succeeding in such a work, here in the mountains, with machinery and tools of the poorest description, to say nothing of the unskillful workmen, doctors, lawyers, ministers, scholars, gentlemen, farmers, etc.

When we arrived at the little oak opening described in a former letter, we were, of course, in duty bound to take a draught from the spring, which its admirers declare, is the best water in all California. When it came to my turn, I complacently touched the rusty tin cup, though I never *did* care much for water in the abstract *as* water; though I think it very useful to make coffee, tea, chocolate, and other good drinks, I could never detect any other flavor in it than that of *cold*, and have often wondered whether there was any truth in the re-

mark of a character in some play, "that ever since the world was drowned in it, it had tasted of sinners!"

When we arrived at—what may be called in reference to the Bar—the country seat of Don Juan, we were ushered into the parlor, two sides of which opened upon the garden, and the grand old mountains which rise behind it, while the other two sides and the roof were woven with fresh willow boughs, crisply green, and looking as if the dew had scarcely yet dried from the polished leaves.

After opening some cans of peaches, and cutting up some water-melons gathered from the garden, our friends went into, or rather *out* to the kitchen fire (two or three stones is generally the extent of this useful apartment in the mines), to assist in preparing the breakfast—and *such* a breakfast! If "Tadger could do it when it chose," so can we miners. We had—but what did we *not* have? There were oysters, which, I am sure, could not have been nicer had they just slid from their shells on the shore at Amboy; salmon, in color like the "red, red gold"; venison, with a fragrant, spicy gusto, as if it had been fed on cedar buds; beef cooked in the Spanish fashion—that is, strung on to a skewer, and roasted on the coals—than which, I never tasted better; preserved chicken, and almost every possible vegetable bringing up the rear. Then, for drinkables, we had tea, coffee and chocolate, champagne, claret and porter, with stronger spirits *for* the stronger spirits. We lacked but one thing, that was ice, which we forgot to bring from the Bar—as only four miles from our cabin, the snow never melts, that is a luxury we are never without—and, indeed, so excessively warm has been the season, that without it, and the milk which has been brought us daily from a ranch five miles from here, we should have suffered. I must say, that even though we had no ice, our mountain pic-nic, with its attendant dandies, in their blue and red flannel shirts, was the most charming affair of the kind that I ever attended.

On our return, we called to see "Yank's" cub, which is fast rising into young grizzly-bear-hood. It is about the size of a calf, very good-natured, and quite tame. Its acquirements, as yet, are few, being limited to climbing a pole. Its education has not been conducted with that care and attention which so intelligent a beast merits, but it is soon, I hear, to be removed to the valley, and placed under teachers capable of developing its wonderful talents to the utmost.

We also stopped at a shanty to get a large gray squirrel, which had been promised to me some days' before; but I certainly am the most unfortunate wretch in the world with pets. This spiteful thing, on purpose to annoy me, I do believe, went and got itself drowned the very night before I was to take it home. It is always so—

I never had two humming-birds,
With plumage like a sunset sky,
But one was sure to fly away,
And the other one was sure to die.

I never nursed a flying squirrel,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But it always ran into somebody's tent,
Got mistaken for a rat and killed!

There, M., there is poetry for you. "Oh, the second verse does n't rhyme." "Does n't?" "And it ain't original, isn't it?" Well, I never heard that rhyme was necessary to make a poet, any more than colors to make a painter. And what if Moore *did* say the same thing twenty years ago? I am sure any writer would consider himself lucky to have an idea which has been anticipated but *once*. I am tired of being a "mute inglorious Milton," and like that grand old master of English song, would gladly write "something which the world would not willingly let die," and having made that first step, as witness the above verses, who knows what will follow.

Last night, one of our neighbor's had a dinner party. He came in to borrow a teaspoon. "Had you not better take them all?" I said. "Oh, no," was the answer, "that would be too much luxury. My guests are not used to it, and they would think that I was getting aristocratic, and putting on airs. One is enough; they can pass it round from one to the other."

A blacksmith—not the "learned" one—has just entered, inquiring for the doctor, who is not in, and he is obliged to wait. Shall I write down the conversation with which he is at this moment entertaining me? "Who writ this 'ere?" is his first remark, taking up one of my most precious books, and leaving the marks of his irreverent fingers upon the clean pages. "Shakespeare," I answer, as politely as possible. "Did Spokshave write it? He was an almighty smart fellow, that Spokshave, I've hear'n tell," replies my visitor. "I must write hum, and tell our folks that this 'ere is the first carpet I've seen sin I came to Californy, four year come next month," is his next remark. For the last half-hour, he has been entertaining me with a wearisome account of the murder of his brother by an Irishman, in Boston, and the chief feeling which he exhibits, is a fear that the jury should only bring in a verdict of manslaughter. But I hear F.'s step, and his entrance relieves me from the bore.

I am too tired to write more. Alas, dear M., this letter is indeed a stupid one—a poor return for your pregnant epistles. It is too late to better it; the express goes at eight in the morning. The midnight moon is looking wonderingly in at the cabin window, and the river has a sleepy murmur, that impels me irresistibly bedward.

"NIL DESPERANDUM!"

BY G.

TRUST in God! but gain his favor
By submission to thy lot—
Nor let evils make thee waver,
Though success may crown thee not.

If thou failest, do not falter,
But strive harder than before,
To attain hope's cherish'd altar,
Though thou diest at the door.

If by love thy heart be blighted—
Banish ev'ry grief and care,

Let thy troth again be plighted
Though it be to one less fair.

If in youth thy time was wasted
And thy mind untutored be,
Let pure Wisdom's fount be tasted,
Though it bitter prove to thee.

Let not Fortune's smile beguile thee,
Nor her frown thy spirit quail,
Onward press, though men revile thee,
And thou shalt at last prevail.

THE DEVIL'S FIDDLE: A CALIFORNIA LEGEND.

BY N.

ON a summer's evening in the beginning of the "golden age" of California, a party of gold diggers was assembled in a wild, rugged ravine, high up on the Stanislaus.

The sun had set some time, and the light of the moon, struggling down through the branches of the somber trees, mingled with the ruddy glare of the fire round which these men were collected.

A disagreeable looking set they were, these gold diggers—very uncouth, very ragged and very dirty, with their unkempt hair and tangled beards—aye, and even of a dissipated and ruffianly aspect, armed as they were with pistols, and large, truculent looking knives.

They had finished their supper, and some of them were now playing at cards by the fire, while others, sitting or stretched lazily on the ground, were smoking their pipes, and discussing the success of the day.

That they were favored by fortune might be easily gathered from their conversation, for it seems that the virgin soil of the ravine yielded up its treasures without any reluctance, and by simply digging with their knives, they could, in a single day, gather many pounds of gold, all in large lumps, for, as to the fine gold dust, they did not even think it worth the trouble of collecting.

Their conversation was only interrupted now and then by applications to a black bottle, which passed from hand to hand, and which they occasionally replenished from a barrel, placed under the shelter of a bush; and, between the influence of the liquor, and their satisfaction with their almost fabulous success, they grew quite jolly and communicative, and began to detail their various plans for the future.

A mean-looking man, with low forehead, red hair, and a terrible squint, was the first to start this topic. He said that he would soon have gold enough for his purpose, and that he would shortly go down to "the Bay" and manage to get into office. "And it is none of your trumpery affairs that will satisfy me," he said, "but I want a good, fat office, with a swinging salary, large influence, and plenty of pickings. And won't I make it pay?" he added, "I guess it will be even better than gold digging."

Here a long, lean, hungry-looking man struck in, saying that, no doubt, it was a very good plan, but that he had thought of one which was still better. He intended to speculate in property, and also to open a bank. "I'll throw my net into that great pond called the world, and it will be strange if I do not catch plenty of gudgeons;" and in saying this, he puckered up his thin lips into a dreary smile at his own conceit.

"Well, and when you have made plenty of money, what do you intend to do then?" asked one fat fellow, with a florid face, particularly red ears, and a bald spot on the top of his head, which shone in the moonlight like polished ivory.

wherever they go they will bear with them the characters formed under her immediate eye. In a more extended intercourse with mankind, many of the prejudices resulting from a defective or narrow education will melt away ; but the good principles implanted by a conscientious and loving-hearted mother—the sense of right and wrong as learned in early youth, time never obliterates. Exposed to malign influences in a new sphere of action, the good may appear to lie dormant, or to be choked up with weeds ; but a chance word spoken, even a single tone, will suffice to recall the pure image of a beloved mother or sister ; and with the remembrance spring up the virtuous resolutions of other days. Many a one who has climbed high in the scale of eminence, can trace his progress to the teachings of a beloved mother, or a revered grandmother, who had learned life's lesson, and through much tribulation had found the well-spring of truth, to which with a steady hand she guided his thirsty soul.

In summing up the character of Mrs. Moore, we may say in a word—she was a faithful, affectionate wife, a fond, judicious mother, a true friend and counselor, a cheerful companion, a consistent christian, a discreet matron, a tender, sympathizing nurse, and was, withal, a most beautiful woman. The influence of such a woman never dies. Her memory is revered by her descendants ; the female portion of which, down to the third generation, have inherited with much of her beauty, many of those traits of character for which she was remarkable. To this day, lessons of wisdom derived from “Grandmother Moore,” are repeated with an undying faith in their accuracy.

THE SONG OF THE BLACKSMITH.

BY JOHN F. SEARS.

I WIELD my hammer high,
As I toil by my lurid fire,
And I make the broad sparks fly,
As I weld the steel for the tire—
As I form the graceful spade
With apt, reliant blow,
Or fashion the trusty blade
By the flame, giving cheerful glow.

What though my life be spent
By the forge-fire, red and warm?
I am proud in my gathered strength,—
In my thick and brawny arm;
I yearn for no gandy fame,
No star-embazoned breast;
Give me but an honest name,
My labor—and my rest.

Then hurrah for my anvil bright,
For the dingy smithy floor!
Hurrah for the coal-fire light,
And the sparkling, melting ore,—
For the dense, gray, curling smoke,
For the fuller, tongs and wedge;
And hurrah for the mighty stroke,
Of the heavily falling sledge!

For it giveth a gladsome song,
Which filleth the hollow glen,
And its echo repeateth long
The good of my fellow-men;
As round the white sparks fly,
And I toil by my lurid fire,
Wielding the hammer high,
For the spade, for the blade or the tire.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER TWENTY-FIRST.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, Oct. 16, 1852.

SINCE I last wrote you, dear M., I have spent three weeks in the American Valley, and I returned therefrom humbled to the very dust, when thinking of my former vain-glorious boast of having "seen the elephant." To be sure, if having fathomed to its very depths the power of mere existence, without any reference to those conventional aids which civilization has the folly to think necessary to the performance of that agreeable duty, was any criterion, I certainly fancied that I had a right to brag of having taken a full view of that most piquant specimen of the brute creation, the California "Elephant." But it seems that I was mistaken, and that we miners have been dwelling in perfect palaces, surrounded by furniture of the most gorgeous description, and reveling in every possible luxury. Well, one lives and learns, even on the borders of civilization. But to begin at the beginning, let me tell you the history of my dreadful pleasure tour to the American Valley.

You must know that a convention had been appointed to meet at that place, for the purpose of nominating representatives for the coming election. As F. had the misfortune to be one of the delegates, nothing would do but I must accompany him; for as my health had really suffered through the excitements of the summer, he fancied that change of air might do me good. Mrs. —, one of our new ladies, had been invited to spend a few weeks in the same place, at the residence of a friend of her husband, who was living there with his family. As Mr. — was also one of the delegates, we made up a party together, and being joined by two or three other gentlemen, formed quite a gay cavalcade.

The day was beautiful; but when is it ever otherwise in the mountains of California? We left the Bar by another ascent than the one from which I entered the Bar, and it was so infinitely less steep than the latter, that it seemed a mere nothing. You, however, would have fancied it quite a respectable hill, and Mr. — said, that so fearful did it seem to him the first time he went down it, that he vowed never to cross it but once more; a vow, by the way, which has been broken many times. The whole road was a succession of charming tableaux, in which sparkling streamlets, tiny waterfalls, frisky squirrels gleaming amid the foliage like a flash of red light; quails, with their pretty gray plumage flecked with ivory; dandy jays, great awkward black crows, pert little lizards, innumerable butterflies, and a hundred other

"Plumed insects, winged and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,"

were the characters, grouped in a frame of living green, curtained with the blue folds of our inimitable sky.

We had intended to start very early in the morning, but, as usual on such excursions, did not get off until about ten o'clock. Somebody's horse came up missing, or somebody's saddle needed repairing, or somebody's shirt did not come home in season from the washer-Chinaman—for if we *do* wear flannel shirts, we choose to have them clean when we ride out with the ladies—or something else equally important detained us. It was about nine o'clock in the evening when we reached the valley, and rode up to Greenwood's Rancho, which, by the way, was the headquarters of the Democratic party. It was crowded to overflowing, as our ears told us, long before we came in sight of it, and we found it utterly impossible to obtain lodgings there. This building has no windows, but a strip of crimson calico, placed half-way from the roof and running all round the house, lets in the *red* light and supplies their place. However, we did not stop long to enjoy the pictorial effect of the scarlet windows—which really look very prettily in the night—but rode straight to the American Rancho, a quarter of a mile beyond. This was the headquarters of the Whigs, to which party our entire company, excepting myself, belonged. Indeed, the gentlemen had only consented to call at the other house through compassion for the ladies, who were suffering from extreme fatigue, and they were rejoiced at the prospect of getting among birds of the same feather. There, however, we were informed that it was equally impossible to procure accommodations. In this dilemma, we could do nothing but accept Mrs. ——'s kind invitation, and accompany her to the rancho of her friend, although she herself had intended, as it was so late, to stop at one of the hotels for the night. We were so lucky as to procure a guide at this place, and with this desirable addition to the party, we started on.

I had been very sick for the last two hours, and had only kept up with the thought that we should soon arrive at our journey's end; but when I found that we were compelled to ride three miles further, my heart sank within me; I gave up all attempts to guide my horse, which one of the party led, leaned my head on the horn of my saddle and resigned myself to my fate. We were obliged to walk our horses the entire distance, as I was too sick to endure any other motion. We lost our way once or twice; were exhausted with fatigue and faint with hunger, chilled through with the cold and our feet wet with the damp night air.

I forgot to tell you that Mrs. ——, being very fleshy, was compelled to ride astride, as it would have been utterly impossible for her to have kept her seat if she had attempted to cross those steep hills in the usual feminine mode of sitting a horse. She wore dark gray bloomers, and with a Kossuth hat and feather, looked like a handsome, chubby boy. Now, riding astride, to one unaccustomed to it, is, as you can easily imagine, more safe than comfortable, and poor Mrs. —— was utterly exhausted.

When we arrived at our destined haven, which we did at last, the gentleman of the house came forward and invited Mr. and Mrs. ——

to alight. Not a word was said to the rest of us, not even "Good evening;" but I was too far gone to stand upon ceremony, so I dismounted and made a rush for the cooking-stove, which, in company with an immense dining table, on which lay (enchanting sight) a quarter of beef, stood under a roof, the four sides open to the winds of heaven. As for the remainder of the party, they saw how the land lay, and *vamosed* to parts unknown, (namely the American Rancho,) where they arrived at four o'clock in the morning, some tired, I *guess*, and made such a fearful inroad upon the eatables, that the proprietor stood aghast, and was only pacified by the ordering in from the bar, of a most generous supply of the drinkable, which, as he sells it by the glass, somewhat reconciled him to the terrific onslaught upon the larder.

In the mean time, behold me, with much more truth than poetry, literally "alone in my glory," seated upon a wooden stool, with both feet perched upon the stove, and crouching over the fire in a vain attempt to coax some warmth into my thoroughly chilled frame. The gentleman and lady of the house, with Mr. and Mrs. —, are assembled in grand conclave, in one room of which the building consists; and as California houses are *not* planned with a view to eavesdroppers, I have the pleasure of hearing the following spirited and highly interesting conversation. There is a touching simplicity about it truly dramatic:

I must premise, that Mrs. — had written the day before, to know if the visit, which her husband's friend had so earnestly solicited, would be conveniently received at this time; and was answered by the arrival the next morning, for the use of herself and husband, of two horses, one of which, I myself had the pleasure of riding, and found it a most excellent steed. Moreover, when Mr. — gave her the invitation, he said he would be pleased to have one of her lady friends accompany her. So you see she was "armed and equipped as the law directed."

Thus defended, she was ushered into the presence of her hostess, whom she found reclining gracefully upon a very nice bed, hung with snow-white muslin curtains, looking—for she is extremely pretty, though now somewhat pale—like a handsome wax doll.

"I am extremely sorry to find you unwell. Pray, when were you taken, and are you suffering much at present?" commenced Mrs. — supposing that her illness was merely an attack of headache or some other temporary sickness.

"Ah," groaned my lady in a faint voice, "I have had a fever and am just beginning to get a little better. I have not been able to sit up any yet, but hope to do so in a few days. As we have no servants, my husband is obliged to nurse me as well as to cook for several men, and I am really afraid that under the circumstances, you will not be as comfortable here as I could wish."

"But, good heavens, my dear madam, why did you not send me word that you were sick? Surely you must have known that it would be more agreeable to me to visit you when you are in health?" replied Mrs. —.

"Oh," returned our fair invalid, "I thought that you had set your heart upon coming, and would be disappointed if I postponed the visit!"

Now this was adding insult to injury. Poor Mrs. ——! worn out with hunger, shivering with cold, herself far from well, a new comer, unused to the make-shift ways which some people fancy essential to California life, expecting from the husband's representations, and knowing that he was very rich, so different a reception; and withal, frank perhaps to a fault, she must be pardoned if she was not as grateful as she ought have been, and answered a little crossly:

"Well, I must say, that I have not been treated well. Did you really think that I was so childishly crazy to get away from home, that I would leave my nice plank house," (it rose into palatial splendor, when compared with the floorless shanty, less comfortable than a Yankee farmer's barn, in which she was standing,) "with its noble fireplace, nice board floor, two pleasant windows and comfortable bed, for this wretched place? Upon my word, I am very much disappointed. However, I do not care so much for myself as for poor Mrs. ——, whom I persuaded to come with me."

"What, is there *another* lady!" almost shrieked (and well she might under the circumstances) the horror-stricken hostess. "You can sleep with me, but I am sure I do not know what we can do with another one."

"Certainly," was the bold reply of Mrs. ——, for she was too much provoked to be embarrassed in the least; "availing myself of your husband's kind permission, I invited Mrs. ——, who could not procure lodgings at either of the hotels, to accompany me. But even if I were alone, I should decidedly object to sleep with a sick person, and should infinitely prefer wrapping myself in my shawl and lying on the ground, to being guilty of such a piece of selfishness."

"Well," groaned the poor woman, "Jonathan," or Ichabod, or David, or whatever was the domestic name of her better half, "I suppose that you must make up some kind of a bed for them on the ground."

Now M., only fancy my hearing all this! *Was n't* it a fix for a sensitive person to be in? But instead of bursting into tears, and making myself miserable, as once I should have done, I enjoyed the *contra tems* immensely. It almost cured my headache, and when Mrs. —— came to me and tried to soften matters, I told her to spare her pretty speeches, as I had heard the whole and would not have missed it for anything.

In the mean time, the useful little man, combining in his small person the four functions of husband, cook, nurse and gentleman, made us a cup of tea and some saleratus biscuit; and though I detest saleratus biscuit, and was longing for some of the beef; yet by killing the taste of the alkali with onions, we contrived to satisfy our hunger, and the tea warmed us a little. Our host, in his capacity of chambermaid, had prepared us a couch. I was ushered into the presence of the fair invalid, to whom I made a polite apology for my intrusion. My feet sank nearly to the ankles in the dirt and small stones as I walked across her room.

But how shall I describe to you the sufferings of that dreadful night? I have slept on tables, on doors, and on trunks; I have re-

clined on couches, on chairs, and on the floor ; I have lain on beds of straw, of corn-husks, of palm-leaf, and of ox-hide ; I remember one awful night, spent in a bed-buggy birth, on board of a packet boat on one of the lakes ; in my younger days, I used to allow myself to be stretched upon the Procrustes bed of other peoples' opinion, though I have got bravely over such folly, and now I generally act, think and speak as best pleases myself ; I slept two glorious nights on the bare turf, with my saddle for a pillow and God's kindly sky for a quilt ; I had *heard* of a bed of thorns, of the soft side of a plank, and of the "bed-rock" ; but all my *bodily* experience, theoretical or practical, sinks into insignificance before a bed of cobble-stones ! Nothing in ancient or modern history, can compare with it, unless it be the Irishman's famous down-couch, which consisted of a single feather laid upon a rock ; and like him, if it had not been for the name of it, I should have preferred the bare rock. They *said* that there was straw in the ticking upon which we lay, but I should never have imagined so from the feeling. We had neither pillows nor sheets, but the coarsest blue blankets, and not enough of them, for bed-clothes ; so that we suffered with cold, to add to our other miseries. And then, the fleas ! Well, like the Grecian artist, who veiled the face whose anguish he dared not attempt to depict, I will leave to your imagination, that blackest portion of our strange experiences on that awful occasion.

What became of Mr. —, our host, etc., on this dreadful night, was never known. Mrs. — and I, held council together, and concluded that he was spirited away to some friendly hay-stack ; but as he himself maintained a profound silence on the subject, it remains to this hour an impenetrable mystery, and will be handed down to posterity on the page of history, with that of the "Man in the Iron Mask," and the more modern, but equally unsolvable riddle, of "Who struck Billy Patterson ?"

As soon as it was light, we awoke and glanced around the room. On one side, hung a large quantity of handsome dresses, with a riding habit, hat, gauntlets, whip, saddle and bridle, all of the most elegant description. On the other side, a row of shelves contained a number of pans of milk. There was also a very pretty table service of white crockery, a roll of white carpeting, boxes of soap, chests of tea, casks of sugar, bags of coffee, etc., etc., in the greatest profusion.

We went out into the air. The place, owned by our host, is the most beautiful spot that I ever saw in California. We stood in the midst of a noble grove of the loftiest and largest trees, through which ran two or three carriage roads, with not a particle of undergrowth to be seen in any direction. Somewhere near the center of this lovely place, he is building a house of hewn logs. It will be two stories high and very large. He intends finishing it with the piazza all around, the first floor windows to the ground, green blinds, etc. He informed us that he thought it would be finished in three weeks. You can see that it would have been much pleasanter for Mrs. — to have had the privilege of deferring her visit for a month.

We had a most excellent breakfast. As Mrs. — said, the good people possessed everything but a house.

Soon after breakfast, my friends, who suspected from appearances the night before that I should not prove a very welcome visitor, came for me—the wife of the proprietor of the American Rancho having good-naturedly retired to the privacy of a covered-wagon, (she had just crossed the plains,) and placed her own room at my disposal. Mrs. ——— insisted upon accompanying me until her friend was better. As she truly said, she was too unwell herself, to either assist or amuse another invalid.

My apartment, which was built of logs, was vexatiously small, with no way of letting in light, except by the door. It was as innocent of a floor, and almost as thickly strewn with cobble-stones, as the one which I had just left; but then there *were* some frames built against the side of it, which served for a bed-stead, and we had sheets, which though coarse, were clean. Here, with petticoats, stockings, shoes and shirts, hanging against the logs in picturesque confusion, we received calls from Senators, Representatives, Judges, Attorney-Generals, Doctors, Lawyers, Officers, Editors and Ministers..

The Convention came off the day after our arrival in the valley; and as both of the nominees were from our settlement, we began to think that we were quite a people.

Horse-racing, and gambling, in all their detestable varieties, were the order of the day. There was faro and poker for the Americans, monte for the Spaniards, lansquenet for the Frenchmen, and smaller games for the “outsiders.”

At the close of the Convention, the rancho passed into new hands, and as there was much consequent confusion, I went over to Green-woods, and Mrs. ——— returned to the house of her friend, where, having ordered two or three hundred armfuls of hay to be strewn on the ground, she made a “temporary arrangement” with some boards for a bedstead, and fell to making sheets from one of the innumerable rolls of cloth which lay about in every direction; for as I said before, these good people had everything but a house.

My new room, with the exception of its red calico window, was exactly like the old one. Although it was very small, a man and his wife—the latter was the housekeeper of the establishment—slept there also. With the aid of those everlasting blue blankets, I curtained off our part, so as to obtain some small degree of privacy. I had *one* large pocket handkerchief—it was meant for a young sheet—on my bed, which was filled with good, sweet, fresh hay, and plenty of the azure coverings, so short and narrow, that when once we had lain down, it behooved us to remain perfectly still until morning, as the least movement disarranged the bed furniture and insured us a shivering night.

On the other side of the partition, against which our bedstead was *built*, stood the cooking-stove, in which they burnt nothing but pitch-pine wood. As the room was not lined, and the boards very loosely put together, the soot sifted through in large quantities, and covered us from head to foot, and though I bathed so often that my hands were dreadfully chapped and bled profusely, from having them so much in the water, yet in spite of my efforts, I looked like a chimney-sweep, masquerading in women's clothes.

As it was very cold at this time, the damp ground upon which we were living, gave me a severe cough, and I suffered so much from chillness that at last I betook myself to Rob Roy shawls and India rubbers, and for the rest of the time walked about, a mere bundle of gum elastic and Scotch plaid. My first move in the morning, was to go out and sit upon an old traveling wagon, which stood in front of my room, in order, like an old beggar woman, to gather a little warmth from the sun.

Mrs. — said, "The Bostonians were horror-stricken, because the poor Irish—who had never known any other mode of living—had no floors in their cabins, and were getting up all sorts of 'Howard Benevolent Societies,' to supply unfortunate Pat with what is to him an unwished for luxury." She thought, "That they would be much better employed in organizing associations for ameliorating the condition of those wretched women in California, who were so mad as to leave their comfortable homes in the mines, to go a pleasuring in the valleys!"

My poor husband suffered even more than I did, for though he had a nominal share in my luxurious bed with its accompanying pocket handkerchief, yet, as Mrs. — took it into her head to pay me a visit, he was obliged to resign it to her and betake himself to the bar-room; and as every bunk and all the blankets were engaged, he was compelled to lie on the bar floor, (thank Heaven there was a civilized floor there of real boards,) with his boots for a pillow.

But I am sure you must be tired of this long letter, for I am, and I reserve the rest of my adventures in the American Valley, until another time.

WRITE THY THOUGHT.

BY H. H. L.

WRITE thy thought with bold endeavor—
Stamp thy mind upon some page;
To the host, that cometh ever,
Leave some passing heritage.

Speech is but an idle sowing,
Cast upon the empty air;
But the impress of thy spirit,
Traced in ink, remaineth there.

Thinkest thou all human purpose
From one changeless pattern came?
Nature seldom copies feature,
Mind was *never* made the same!

Be sure thy heart hath hidden instincts,
That no other heart may know—
Hidden floods of thought and feeling,
Write, and let them freely flow.

Write! but call around to aid thee,
Reason, Justice, Faith and Love,
Else thy lowliest aspiration,
No responsive chord shall move.

For the dark and deadly poison
That envenomed pens distill,
Cannot conquer Truth eternal,
But a bitter chalice fill.

A measure, that in sorrow
They who mete, shall surely drink,
And the name upraised on error,
In oblivion shall sink.

Write with high and manly purpose
"Heart within, and God o'erhead,"
And thy words shall live for ages.
Though thy pulseless form be dead.

Fear'st thou that mightier spirits
Will eclipse thy feeble light?
Doth not every star in Heav'n
Help dispel the gloom of night?

Seest thou yon faint, pale watcher,
Almost lost in space afar?
Yet our system's glorious monarch
May be rivaled by that star!

Yet that pale and silent glimmer
May create eternal day,
While the planet's lordly brilliance,
Is but a reflected ray.

So e'en thou, so seeming lowly,
May possess an innate light,
To dispel some mental darkness
And illumine the moral night.

How fair on high rose the ocean's dome,
 Above the sparkling waters;
 How sweet were the sailor's dreams of home,
 And bright as its fairest daughters.
 Alas, for those dreams, and that lone, lone barque!
 Far over the midnight wave
 Ring shrieks so wild! Ye angels, hark!
 It has sunk to an ocean grave!

When the sun rode up the welkin blue,
 Revealing earth and heaven,
 On the wide, wide sea no eye might view
 The barque that sailed at even.
 Far down, in the ocean's gem-lighted hall,
 The mermaid's guests are sleeping;
 While a fairy troupe, of sea-nymphs all,
 Fond vigils are o'er them keeping.

Oh, sea! thou dark, mysterious sea!
 So lonely, grand and vast;
 Thou mayst swell thy conquests, and deck thy halls,
 And keep thy treasures fast.
 We yield thee the wrecks of thy countless storms,
 Thy priceless gems, and—with direst pain—
 We give thee, oh, many beloved forms;
 But never the *souls* of thy *slain*!

SONG OF THE FIREMEN.

DEDICATED TO THE FIREMEN OF SAN FRANCISCO.

BY JAMES LINEN.

HARK! hear ye the sound of the tolling bell,
 That breaks on the ear like a dismal knell?
 'Tis the startling ring that aloud proclaims,
 We must onward rush to the sweeping flames.

CHORUS.—Hurrah! for our our homes, and our gallant band,
 The flower and the pride of the golden land;
 We have hearts that feel, we have arms that save,
 And our names shall live with the free and brave!

Smoke in black volumes may veil the blue sky,
 Wild the gale whistle, and red meteors fly;
 The doomed pile may blaze, and rafters may fall;—
 No fiery tempest our hearts can appal.

CHORUS.—Hurrah! for our homes, &c.

Flames may be raging like demons of wrath,—
 Death may be lurking in dire Ruin's path,—
 But firemen ne'er shrink from facing the foe,
 And Danger defy wherever we go.

CHORUS.—Hurrah! for our homes, &c.

Bold and undaunted, with hearts beating free,
 Swift as our eagles, to Duty we flee;—
 While others toil on for gold or for fame,
 Let Honor preserve unblemished our name.

CHORUS.—Hurrah! for our homes, &c.

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER TWENTY-SECOND.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, Oct. 27, 1852.

IN my last epistle, my dear M., I left myself safely ensconced at Greenwood's Rancho, in about as uncomfortable a position as a person could well be, where board was fourteen dollars a week. Now you must not think that the proprietors were at all to blame for our miserable condition. They were, I assure you, very gentlemanly and intelligent men; and I owe them a thousand thanks, for the many acts of kindness, and the friendly efforts which they made to amuse and interest me while I was in their house. They said from the first that they were utterly unprepared to receive ladies, and it was only after some persuasion, and as a favor to me, that they consented to let me come. They intend soon to build a handsome house; for it is thought that this valley will be a favorite summer resort for people from the cities below.

The American Valley is one of the most beautiful in all California. It is seven miles long and three or four wide, with the Feather River wending its quiet way through it, unmolested by flumes, and undisturbed by wing dams. It is a superb farming country, everything growing in the greatest luxuriance. I saw turnips there which measured larger round than my waist, and all other vegetables in the same proportion. There are beautiful rides in every direction; though I was too unwell during my stay there to explore them as I wished. There is one draw-back upon the beauty of these valleys, and it is one peculiar to all the scenery in this part of California—and that is, the monotonous tone of the foliage, nearly all the trees being firs. One misses that infinite variety of waving forms, and those endless shades of verdure, which make New England forest scenery so exquisitely lovely. And then that gorgeous autumnal phenomenon, witnessed, I believe, nowhere but in the Northern States of the Union, one never sees here. How often, in my far-away Yankee home, have I laid me down at eve, with the whole earth looking so freshly green, to rise in the morning and behold the wilderness blossoming, not only like the rose, but like all other flowers beside, and glittering as if a shower of butterflies had fallen upon it during the silent watches of the night. I have a vague idea that I "hooked" that butterfly comparison from somebody. If so, I beg the injured person's pardon, and he or she may have a hundred of *mine* to pay for it.

It was at Greenwood's Rancho, that the famous quartz hoax originated last winter, which so completely gulled our good miners on the river. I visited the spot, which has been excavated to some extent. The stone is very beautiful, being lined and streaked and splashed with crimson, purple, green, orange, and black. There was one large white

block, veined with stripes of a magnificent blood-red color, and partly covered with a dark mass, which was the handsomest thing of the kind I ever saw. Some of the crystalizations were wonderfully perfect. I had a piece of the bed rock given me, completely covered with natural prisms, varying in size from an inch down to those not larger than the head of a pin.

Much of the immigration from across the plains, on its way to the cities below, stops here for awhile to recruit. I always had a strange fancy for that Nomadic way of coming to California. To lie down under starry skies, hundreds of miles from any human habitation, and to rise up on dewy mornings, to pursue our way through a strange country, so wildly beautiful, seeing each day something new and wonderful, seemed to me truly enchanting. But cruel reality strips *everything* of its rose tints. The poor women arrive, looking as haggard as so many Endorean witches; burnt to the color of a hazel-nut, with their hair cut short, and its gloss entirely destroyed by the alkali, whole plains of which they are compelled to cross on the way. You will hardly find a family that has not left some beloved one buried upon the plains. And they are fearful funerals, those. A person dies, and they stop just long enough to dig his grave and lay him in it, as decently as circumstances will permit, and the long train hurries onward, leaving its healthy companion of yesterday, perhaps, in this boundless city of the dead. On this hazardous journey, they dare not linger.

I was acquainted with a young widow of twenty, whose husband died of cholera when they were but five weeks on their journey. He was a Judge in one of the Western States, and a man of some eminence in his profession. She is a pretty little creature, and all the aspirants to matrimony are candidates for her hand.

One day a party of immigrant women came into my room, which was also the parlor of the establishment. Some observation was made, which led me to enquire of one of them if her husband was with her.

"She hain't got no husband," fairly *chuckled* one of her companions; "She came with *me*, and her feller died of cholera on the plains!"

At this startling and brutal announcement, the poor girl herself gave a hysteric giggle, which I at first thought proceeded from heartlessness; but I was told afterwards, by the person under whose immediate protection she came out, and who was a sister of her betrothed, that the tender woman's heart received such a fearful shock at the sudden death of her lover, that for several weeks her life was despaired of.

I spent a great deal of time calling at the different encampments; for nothing enchanted me half so much as to hear about this strange exodus from the States. I never weary of listening to stories of adventures on the plains, and some of the family histories are deeply interesting.

I was acquainted with four women, all sisters or sisters-in-law, who had among them thirty-six children, the entire number of which had arrived thus far in perfect health. They could of themselves form quite a respectable village.

The immigration this year, contained many intelligent and truly ele-

gant persons, who, having caught the fashionable epidemic, had left luxurious homes in the States, to come to California. Among others, there was a young gentleman of nineteen, the son of a United States Senator, who having just graduated, felt adventurous, and determined to cross the plains. Like the rest, he arrived in a somewhat dilapidated condition, with elbows out, and a hat the very counterpart of Sam Weller's "gossamer ventilation," which, if you remember, "though *not* a very handsome 'un to look at, was an astonishin' good 'un to wear!" I must confess that he became ragged clothes the best of any one I ever saw, and made me think of the picturesque beggar boys, in Murillo's paintings of Spanish life.

Then there was a person, who used to sing in public with Ossian Dodge. He had a voice of remarkable purity and sweetness, which he was kind enough to permit us to hear now and then. I hardly know of what nation he claimed to be. His father was an Englishman, his mother an Italian; he was born in Poland, and had lived nearly all his life in the United States. He was not the only musical genius that we had among us. There was a little girl at one of the tents, who had taught herself to play on the accordeon on the way out. She was really quite a prodigy, singing very sweetly, and accompanying herself with much skill upon the instrument.

There was another child, whom I used to go to look at, as I would go to examine a picture. She had, without exception, the most beautiful face I ever saw. Even the alkali had not been able to mar the golden glory of the curls which clustered around that splendid little head. She had soft brown eyes, which shone from beneath their silken lashes, like "a tremulous evening star;" a mouth which made you think of a string of pearls threaded on scarlet; and a complexion of the waxen purity of the japonica, with the exception of a band of brownest freckles, which, extending from the tip of each cheek straight across the prettiest possible nose, added, I used to fancy, a new beauty to her enchanting face. She was very fond of me, and used to bring me wild cherries which her brothers had gathered for her. Many a morning I have raised my eyes from my book, startled by that vision of infant loveliness—for her step had the still grace of a snow-flake—standing in beautiful silence by my side.

But the most interesting of all my pets was a widow, whom we used to call the "long woman." When but a few weeks on the journey, she had buried her husband, who died of cholera after about six hours illness. She had come on; for what else could she do? No one was willing to guide her back to her old home in the States; and when I knew her, she was living under a large tree a few rods from the rancho, and sleeping at night, with all her family, in her one covered wagon. God only knows where they all stowed themselves away, for she was a modern Mrs. Rogers, with "nine small children and one at the breast;" indeed, of this catechismical number, the oldest was but fifteen years of age, and the youngest a nursing babe of six months. She had eight sons and one daughter. Just fancy how dreadful; only one girl to all that boy! People used to wonder what took me so often to her encampment, and at the interest with which I listened to what

they called her "stupid talk." Certainly, there was nothing poetical about the woman. Leigh Hunt's friend could not have elevated *her* common-place into the sublime. She was immensely tall, and had a hard, weather-beaten face, surmounted by a dreadful horn comb and a heavy twist of hay-colored hair, which, before it was cut and its gloss all destroyed by the alkali, must, from its luxuriance, have been very handsome. But what interested me so much in her, was the dogged and determined way in which she had set that stern, wrinkled face of her's against poverty. She owned nothing in the world but her team, and yet she planned all sorts of successful ways, to get food for her small, or rather large family. She used to wash shirts, and iron them on a chair—in the open air, of course; and you can fancy with what success. But the gentlemen were too generous to be critical, and as they paid her three or four times as much as she asked, she accumulated quite a handsome sum in a few days. She made me think of a long-legged, very thin hen, scratching for dear life, to feed her never-to-be-satisfied brood. Poor woman! she told me that she was compelled to allowance *her* young ones, and that she seldom gave them as much as they could eat, at any one meal. She was worse off than the

—— "old woman who lived in a shoe,
And had so many children she didn't know what to do;
To some she gave butter, and some she gave bread,
And to some she gave whippings, and sent them to bed."

Now *my* old woman had no butter and very little bread; and she was so naturally economical, that even whippings were sparingly administered. But after all their privations, they were—with the exception of the eldest hope—as healthy looking a set of ragged little wretches as ever I saw. The aforesaid "hope" was the longest, the leanest, and the bob-sidedest specimen of a Yankee that it is possible to imagine. He wore a white face, whiter eyes, and whitest hair; and walked about, looking as if existence was the merest burden, and he wished somebody would have the goodness to take it off his hands. He seemed always to be in the act of yoking up a pair of oxen, and ringing every change of which the English alphabet is capable, upon the one single Yankee execration, "*darnation!*" which he scattered, in all its comical varieties, upon the tow head of his young brother, a piece of chubby giggle, who was forever trying to hold up a dreadful yoke, which *wouldn't* "stay put," in spite of all the efforts of those fat, dirty little hands of his. The "long woman," mother like, excused him by saying that he had been sick; though once when the "darned fools" flew thicker than usual, she gently observed that "he had forgotten that he was a child himself once." He certainly retained no trace of having enjoyed that delightful state of existence; and though one would not be so rude as to call him an "old boy," yet being always clad in a middle-aged habit, an elderly coat and adult pantaloons, one would as little fancy him a *young* man. Perhaps the fact of his wearing his father's wardrobe, in all its unaltered amplitude, might help to confuse one's ideas on the subject.

There was another dear old lady, to whom I took the largest kind of a liking, she was so exquisitely neat. Although she too had no floor, her babe always had on a clean white dress and face to match.

She was about four feet high, and had a perfect passion for wearing those frightful frontpieces of false hair, with which the young women of L. were once in the habit of covering their abundant tresses. She used to send me little pots of fresh butter,—the first that I had tasted since I left the States,—beautifully stamped, and looking like ingots of virgin gold. I, of course, made a dead set at the frontpiece; though I do believe, that to this distorted taste, and its accompanying horror of a cap, she owed the preservation of her own beautiful hair. To please me she laid it aside; but I am convinced that it was restored to its proud eminence as soon as I left the valley, for she evidently had a “sneaking kindness” for it that nothing could destroy. I have sometimes thought that she wore it from religious principle, thinking it her duty to look as old as possible, for she appeared fifteen years younger when she took it off. She told me that in crossing the plains, she used to stop on Saturdays, and taking everything out of the wagons, wash them in strong lye; to which precaution she attributed the perfect health which they all enjoyed (the *family*, not the wagons) during the whole journey.

There is one thing for which the immigrants deserve high praise, and that is, for having adopted the Bloomer dress, (frightful as it is on all other occasions) in crossing the plains. For such an excursion it is just the thing.

I ought to say a word about the dances which we used to have in the bar room, a place so low that a *very* tall man could not have stood upright in it. One side was fitted up as a store, and another side with bunks for lodgers. These bunks were elegantly draped with red calico, through which we caught dim glimpses of blue blankets. If they could only have had sheets, they would have fairly been enveloped in the American colors. By the way, I wonder if there is anything *national* in this eternal passion for blue blankets and red calico? On ball nights the bar was closed, and everything was very quiet and respectable. To be sure, there was some danger of being swept away in a flood of tobacco juice; but luckily the floor was uneven, and it lay around in puddles, which with care one could avoid, merely running the minor risk of falling prostrate upon the wet boards, in the midst of a galopade.

Of course the company was made up principally of the immigrants. Such dancing, such dressing, and such conversation surely was never heard or seen before. The gentlemen, generally, were compelled to have a regular fight with their fair partners, before they could drag them on to the floor. I am happy to say, that almost always the stronger vessel won the day, or rather night, except in the case of certain timid youths, who after one or two attacks, gave up the battle in despair.

I thought that I had had some experience in bad grammar, since I came to California, but the good people were the first that I had ever heard use right royal *we*, instead of *us*. Do not imagine that all, or even the larger part of the company, were of this description. There were many intelligent and well-bred women, whose acquaintance I made with extreme pleasure.

After reading the description of the inconveniences and discomforts

which we suffered in the American Valley,—and I can assure you that I have not at all exaggerated them,—you may imagine my joy when two of our friends arrived from Indian Bar, for the purpose of accompanying us home. We took two days for our return, and thus I was not at all fatigued. The weather was beautiful, our friends amusing, and F. well and happy. We stopped at night at a rancho, where they had a tame frog. You cannot think how comically it looked, hopping about the bar, quite as much at home as a tame squirrel would have been. I had a bed made up for me at this place, on one end of a long dining table. It was very comfortable, with the trifling drawback that I had to rise earlier than I wished, in order that what had been a bed at night, might become a table by day.

We stopped at the top of the hill, and set fire to some fir trees. Oh, how splendidly they looked, with the flames leaping and curling amid the dark green foliage, like a golden snake, fiercely beautiful. The shriek which the fire gave as it sprang upon its verdant prey, made me think of the hiss of some furious reptile, about to wrap in its burning folds its helpless victim.

With what perfect delight did I re-enter my beloved log cabin. One of our good neighbors had swept and put it in order before my arrival, and everything was clean and neat as possible. How gratefully to my feet felt the thick warm carpet; how perfect appeared the floor, which I had once reviled (I begged its pardon on the spot) because it was not exactly even; how cosy the old faded calico couch; how thoroughly comfortable the four chairs, (two of them had been thoroughly re-bottomed with brown sail cloth, tastefully put on with a border of carpet tacks); how truly elegant the closet-case toilet table, with the doll's looking glass hanging above, which shewed my face—the first time that I had seen it since I left home—some six shades darker than usual; how convenient the trunk which did duty as a wash-stand, with its vegetable dish instead of a bowl, (at the rancho I had a pint tin pan, when it was not in use in the kitchen); but above and beyond all, how superbly luxurious the magnificent bedstead, with its splendid hair mattress, its clean wide linen sheets, its nice square pillows, and its large generous blankets and quilts. And then the cosy little supper, arrayed on a table-cloth; and the long, delightful evening afterwards, by a fragrant fire of beach and pine, when we talked over our past sufferings! Oh, it was delicious as a dream, and almost made amends for the three dreadful weeks of pleasuring in the American Valley.

TO THE MERRIMACK.

Along thy banks, wild Merrimack,
In summer evening oft I strayed,
Or floated down thy darkened track,
As twilight deepened into shade,
My heart has changed; but still I know
Thy waters sparkle on their way,
And murmur music in their flow,
Which charmed my heart in earlier day.

Swift gliding stream! upon thy tide,
One evening, swept a light canoe;
Two friends were seated side by side,
Whose hearts were *one*, tho' they were two.

Bright stars that beamed with silver light,
Found answering stars in river skies;
And thus my soul, on that still night,
Was mirrored in soft dreamy eyes.

When morning shed its first pale beam,
The star-gleams faded from the river;
Two hearts were parted on life's stream,
No more to wake reflections ever.
As ripples of the dashing oar
Swept mirrored worlds from placid stream,
So faded—and forevermore—
The evening star of love's bright dream.

THE AMERICAN PIONEERS OF CALIFORNIA.

BY J. W.

THE first Americans that arrived in California, over-land, were under the command of Jedediah S. Smith, of New York. Mr. Smith accompanied the first trapping and trading expedition, sent from St. Louis to the head waters of the Missouri, by Gen. Ashley. The ability and energy displayed by him, as a leader of parties engaged in trapping beaver, were considered of so much importance by Gen. Ashley, that he soon proposed to admit him as a partner in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The proposal was accepted, and the affairs of the concern were subsequently conducted by the firm of Ashley and Smith, until 1828, when Mr. Wm. L. Sublette, and Mr. Jackson, who had been engaged in the same business in the mountains, associated themselves with Mr. Smith, and bought out Gen. Ashley. They continued the business, under the name of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, until the summer of 1830, when they retired from the mountains, disposing of their property and interest in the enterprise to Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Solomon Sublette, and Trapp. Mr. Wm. L. Sublette subsequently re-engaged in the business.

In the spring of 1826, Mr. Smith, at the head of a party of about twenty-five men, left the winter quarters of the company to make a spring and fall hunt. Traveling westerly, he struck the sources of Green river, which he followed down to its junction with Grand river, where the two form the Colorado. He there left the river, and traveling westerly, approached the Sierra Nevada of California; when, traveling westwardly, in search of a favorable point to continue his exploration towards the ocean, he crossed the mountains, and descended into the great valley of California, near its south-eastern extremity. Thus being not only the first American, but the first person, who, from the east or north, had entered the magnificent valley of the San Joaquin and Sacramento, or who had ever seen or explored any of the rivers falling into the bay of San Francisco.

The following winter and spring he prosecuted with success, the catching of beaver, on the streams flowing into the lakes of the Tulares, on the San Joaquin and tributaries, as also on some of the lower branches of the Sacramento. At the commencement of summer, the spring hunt having closed, he essayed to return, by following up the American river; but the height of the mountains, and other obstacles which he encountered, induced him to leave the party in the valley, during the summer. He accordingly returned; and having arranged their summer quarters on that river, near the present town of Brighton, prepared to make the journey, accompanied by a few well-tried and hardy hunters, to the summer rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. Selecting favorite and trusty horses and mules, Mr. Smith, with three companions, left camp to undertake one of the most arduous and dangerous journeys ever attempted. Ascending the Sierra Nevada, he crossed it

again bending over my pillow ; feel once more her kiss upon my cheek —be again a boy in the room of my boyhood's sleep, my boyhood's dreams."

"To the present tenant of the farm," he continued, after a short pause, "I shall not be altogether a stranger. My father's name cannot be forgotten in the place, and I am tolerably confident that there is not a dwelling in the village where I shall not meet the kindest hospitality, though seeming, what in truth I am, a dusty vagabond."

We were rapidly nearing the point indicated by the poor philosopher to the coachman as the spot where he wished to alight ; and whilst he was adjusting his bundle on his stick, I thanked him for the relation he had given me, and expressed, in wishing him good-bye, how much satisfaction it would have afforded me, to have had his companionship still longer, and that I most sincerely wished him success in his new undertaking.

"Thanks, many thanks," he returned, whilst taking the hand which I proffered him. "I appreciate your sympathy ; I feel that 'tis from your heart, and to mine it is like gently falling dew. I have read you the principal chapters from my book of life, and have only to regret 'tis an o'er true tale. But never say die. My colors I've nailed to the mast, and whilst there's a rag flying will stick to the craft. Good-bye ! one more shake of your hand, and take with you my best wishes —a poor player's blessing !"

"All right, my pippin !" he exclaimed, addressing the coachman, as he reached the ground, with an attempt at gaiety in the tones of his voice, "Let them go."

And away again we went, leaving the dusty philosopher in the road waving his hand to me, until the Rover turned a bend in our course, and he was lost to view. Yet methinks I see him now, as I there last beheld him, with his dog Sancho at his feet, looking up in his face as though cogitating what would be the next step in the chequered and changing fortunes of his master.

BY J. SWETT.

One Autumn evening, calm and bright,
 We met beneath the twilight's veil,
 Unmarked the swift hours winged their flight,
 As hope told many a visioned tale.
 The twilight deepened into night ;
 Upon the galaxy we gazed,
 And traced the Pleiad's silver light,
 Where the united sisters blazed.

That Autumn evening, calm and bright,
 My hand was clasped awhile in thine ;
 My pulses thrilled with strange delight,
 As thy dark eyes beamed into mine.
 I gazed upon thy soul-lit face
 More than upon the star-lit skies ;
 For deeper poetry love could trace
 Within the depths of thy pure eyes.

We dreamed that when this life was o'er,
 Some star would be our distant goal.
 And on the unknown star-crowned shore
 We still might commune, soul with soul.
 At night's pale noon, with hopes and fears,
 We parted—and it proved forever ;—
 The ties are broken by short years,
 We deemed nor time nor space could sever.

The Autumn evening, calm and still,
 Has come again with circling year ;
 My pulses now no longer thrill,
 The friends I love, no longer near.
 The stars above as brightly burn
 As on the evening when we met ;
 But only memories sad return—
 The dream-star of my life has set !

CALIFORNIA, IN 1852.

BY SHIRLEY.

LETTER TWENTY-THIRD.

RESIDENCE IN THE MINES.

FROM OUR LOG CABIN, Indian Bar, Nov. 21, 1852.

I SUPPOSE Molly, dear—at least, I flatter myself—that you have been wondering and fretting a good deal for the last few weeks, at not hearing from “Dame Shirley.” The truth is, that I have been wondering and fretting *myself* almost into a fever, at the dreadful prospect of being compelled to spend the winter here, which, on every account, is undesirable.

To our unbounded surprise, we found, on our return from the American Valley, that nearly all the fluming companies had failed—contrary to every expectation, on arriving at the bed-rock, no gold made its appearance. But a short history of the rise, progress, and final fate of one of these associations, given me in writing by its own Secretary, conveys a pretty correct idea of the result of the majority of the remainder :

“The thirteen men, of which the ‘American Fluming Company’ consisted, commenced getting out timber in February. On the fifth of July, they began to lay the flume. A thousand dollars were paid for lumber, which they were compelled to buy. They built a dam six feet high and three hundred feet in length, upon which thirty men labored nine days and a half. The cost of said dam was estimated at two thousand dollars. This Company left off working on the twenty-fourth day of September, having taken out in *all*, gold dust to the amount of forty-one dollars and seventy cents ! Their lumber and tools, sold at auction, brought about two hundred dollars.”

A very small amount of arithmetical knowledge, will enable one to figure up what the “American Fluming Company” made, by *their* Summer’s work. This result was, by no means, a singular one ; nearly every person on the river received the same step-mother’s treatment from Dame Nature, in this her mountain workshop.

Of course the whole world (*our* world,) was, to use a phrase much in vogue here, “dead broke.” The shop-keepers, restaurants, and gambling-houses, with an amiable confidingness peculiar to such people, had trusted the miners to that degree, that they themselves were in the same moneyless condition. Such a batch of woful faces was never seen before, not the least elongated of which, was F.’s—to whom nearly all the companies owed large sums.

Of course, with the failure of the golden harvest, “Othello’s occupation was gone.” The mass of the unfortunates laid down the “shovel and the hoe,” and left the river in crowds. It is said, that there are not twenty men remaining on Indian Bar, although two months ago, you could count them up by hundreds.

We were to have departed on the fifth of November, and my toilet-

table and wash-hand-stand, duly packed for that occasion—their occupation *also* gone—have remained ever since in the humble position of mere trunks. To be sure, the express-man called for us at the appointed time ; but, unfortunately, F. had not returned from the American Valley, where he had gone to visit a sick friend, and Mr. Jones was not willing to wait even one day, so much did he fear being caught in a snow-storm with his mules. It was the general opinion, from unmistakable signs, that the rainy-season would set in a month earlier than common, and with unusual severity. Our friends urged me to start on with Mr. Jones, and some other acquaintances, and leave F. to follow on foot, as he could easily overtake us in a few hours. This I decidedly refused to do, preferring to run the fearful risk of being compelled to spend the Winter in the mountains, which—as there is not enough flour to last six weeks, and we, personally, have not laid in a pound of provisions—is not so indifferent a matter as it may at first appear to you. The traders have delayed getting in their Winter stock, on account of the high price of flour ; and God only knows how fatal may be the result of this selfish delay to the unhappy mountaineer, many of whom having families here, are unable to escape into the valley.

It is the twenty-first day of November ; and for the last three weeks, it has rained and snowed alternately, with now and then a fair day sandwiched between, for the express purpose, as it has seemed, of aggravating our misery. For after twelve hours of such sunshine, as only our own California can show, we were sure to be gratified by an exceedingly well got up tableau of the deluge, *without* that ark of safety—a mule team, which, sister Anna-like, we were ever straining our eyes to see descending the hill. “There, I hear a mule bell,” would be the cry, at least a dozen times a day, when away we would all troop to the door, to behold nothing but great, brown raindrops rushing merrily downward, as if in mockery of our sufferings. Five times did the “Squire”—who has lived for some two or three years in the mountains, and is quite weather-wise—solemnly affirm, that the rain was over for the present, and five times did the storm-torrent of the next morning give our prophet the lie. In the meanwhile, we have been expecting each day the advent of a mule train. Now, the rumor goes that Clark’s mules have arrived at Pleasant Valley ; and now that Bob Lewis’s train has reached the Wild Yankee’s ; or that Jones, with any quantity of animals and provisions, has been seen on the brow of the hill, and will probably get in by evening. Thus constantly “is alternating light and gloom,” in a way that nearly drives me mad.

The few men that have remained on the Bar, have amused themselves by prosecuting one another right and left. The “Squire,” bless his honest, lazy Leigh Hunt-ish face, comes out strong on these occasions. He has pronounced decisions, which, for legal acumen, brilliancy and acuteness, would make Daniel Webster, could he hear them, tear his hair to that extent—from sheer envy—that he would be compelled to have a wig ever after. But jesting apart, the “Squire’s” course has been so fair, candid, and sensible, that he has won golden

opinions from all ; and were it not for his insufferable laziness and good-nature, he would have made a most excellent justice of the peace. The prosecuting party generally "gets judgement," which is about all he *does* get ; though sometimes the constable is more fortunate, as happened to-day to our friend W., who, having been detained on the Bar by the rain, got himself sworn into the above office for the fun of the thing. He performs his duties with great delight, and is always accompanied by a guard of honor, consisting of the majority of the men remaining in the place. He entered the cabin about one hour ago, when the following spicy conversation took place between him and F., who happened to be the prosecutor in this day's proceedings :

"Well, old fellow, did you see Big Bill?" eagerly inquired F.

"Yes!" is the short and sullen reply.

"And what did you *get*?" continued his questioner.

"I got THIS!" savagely shouts the amateur constable, at the same time pointing with a grin of rage, to a huge swelling on his upper lip, gleaming with all the colors of the rainbow.

"What did you do then?" was the next, meek inquiry.

"Oh, I came away!" says our brave, young officer of justice. And indeed it would have been madness to have resisted this delightful "Big Bill," who stands six feet four inches in his stockings, with a corresponding amount of bone and muscle, and is a star of the first magnitude in the boxing circles. F. saved the creature's life last Winter, having watched with him three nights in succession. He refuses to pay his bill, "Cos he gin him *calumny*, and other pizen doctor's stuff!" Of course, poor W. got dreadfully laughed at ; though I looked as solemn as possible, while I stayed him with cups of coffee, comforted him with beef-steaks and onions, and coaxed the wounded upper-lip with an infinite succession of little bits of brown paper drowned in brandy.

I wish that you could see *me* about these times. I am generally found seated on a segar-box in the chimney corner, my chin in my hand, rocking backwards and forwards (*weaving*, you used to call it,) in a despairing way, and now and then casting a picturesly hopeless glance about our delapidated cabin. Such a looking place as it is ! Not having been repaired, the rain pouring down the outside of the chimney—which is inside of the house—has liquified the mud, which now lies in spots all over the splendid tin mantle-piece, and festoons itself in graceful arabesques along the sides thereof. The lining overhead is dreadfully stained, the rose-garlanded hangings are faded and torn, the sofa-covering displays picturesque glimpses of hay, and the poor, old worn-out carpet is not enough to make india-rubbers desirable.

Sometimes I lounge forlornly to the window, and try to take a birds-eye view of "out-doors." First, now a large pile of gravel prevents me seeing anything else ; but by dint of standing on tip-toe, I catch sight of a hundred other large piles of gravel—Pelion upon Ossa like heaps of gigantic stones—excavations of fearful deepness, innumerable tents, calico hovels, shingle palaces, *ramaras*, (pretty, arbor-like places, composed of green boughs, and baptized with that sweet name,) half a dozen blue and red-shirted miners, and one hatless *hombre*, in gar-

ments of the airiest description, reclining gracefully at the entrance of the Humboldt, in that transcendental state of intoxication, when a man is compelled to hold on to the earth for fear of falling off. The whole Bar is thickly peppered with empty bottles, oyster cans, sardine boxes, and brandied fruit jars, the harsher outlines of which are softened off by the thinnest possible coating of radiant snow. The river, freed from its wooden flume prison, rolls gradually by. The green and purple beauty of these majestic, old mountains, looks lovelier than ever, through its pearl-like network of foaming streamlets, while, like an immense concave of pure sapphire, without spot or speck, the wonderful and never-enough-to-be-talked-about sky of California, drops down upon the whole, its fathomless splendor. The day happens to be the inner fold of one of the atmospheric sandwiches, alluded to above. Had it been otherwise, I doubt whether I should have had spirit enough to write to you.

I have just been called from my letter, to look at a wonderfully curious gold specimen. I will try to describe it to you, and to convince you that I do not exaggerate its rare beauty, I must inform you that two friends of ours, have each offered a hundred dollars for it; and a blacksmith in the place, a man utterly unimaginative, who would not throw away a red cent on a *mere* fancy, has tried to purchase it for fifty dollars. I wish most earnestly that you could see it. It is of unmixed gold, weighing about two dollars and a half. Your first idea in looking at it, is, of an exquisite little basket. There is the graceful cover, with its rounded nub at the top, the three finely carved sides—it is tri-formed—the little stand, upon which it sets, and the tiny clasp which fastens it. In detail, it is still more beautiful. On one side, you see a perfect W, each finely shaded bar of which, is fashioned with the nicest exactness. The second surface presents to view a Grecian profile, whose delicately cut features remind you of the serene beauty of an antique gem. It is surprising how much expression this face contains, which is enriched by an oval setting of delicate beading. A plain, triangular space of burnished gold, surrounded with bead-work, similar to that which outlines the profile, seems left on purpose for a name. The owner, who is a Frenchman, decidedly refuses to sell this gem, and you will probably never have an opportunity to see, that the same Being who has commanded the violet to be beautiful, can fashion the gold—crucibled into metallic purity, within the earth's dark heart—into shapes as lovely and curious.

To my extreme vexation, Ned, that jewel of cooks and fiddlers, departed at the first approach of rain; since when, I have been obliged to take up the former delightful employment myself. Really, everybody ought to go to the mines, just to see how little it takes to make people comfortable in the world. My ordinary utensils consist of,—item, one iron dipper, which holds exactly three pints; item, one brass kettle of the same size; and, item, the gridiron, made out of an old shovel, which I described in a former letter. With these three assistants, I perform absolute wonders in the culinary way. Unfortunately, I am generally compelled to get three breakfasts, for sometimes the front-stick *will* break, and then down comes the brass kettle of pota-

toes, and the dipper of coffee, extinguishing the fire, spilling the breakfast, wetting the carpet, scalding the dog, waking up F. from an eleven-o'clock-in-the-day dream, and compelling poor me to get up a second edition of my morning's work, on safer and more scientific principles.

At dinner time, some good natured friend carves the beef at a stove outside, on condition that he may have a plate, knife and fork at our table. So when that meal is ready, I spread on the said table—which at other times does duty as a China closet—a quarter of a sheet, which with its three companion quarters, was sanctified and set apart, when I first arrived here, for that sacred purpose. As our guests generally amount to six or eight, we dispense the three tea-spoons at the rate of one to every two or three persons. All sorts of outlandish dishes serve as tea-cups; among others, wine-glasses and tumblers—there are always plenty of these in the mines—figure largely. Last night, our company being larger than usual, one of our friends was compelled to take his tea out of a soup-plate! The same individual, not being able to find a seat, went outside and brought in an empty gin-cask, upon which he sat, sipping iron table-spoons-full of his tea, in great apparent glory and contentment.

F. has just entered, with the joyful news that the express-man has arrived. He says that it will be impossible for mule trains to get in for some time to come, even if the storm is really over, which he does not believe. In many places on the mountains, the snow is already five feet in depth; although, he thinks that so many people are constantly leaving for the valley, that the path will be kept open; so that I can make the journey with comparative ease on his horse, which he has kindly offered to lend me, volunteering to accompany F. and some others, who will make their exodus to the same time, on foot. Of course I shall be obliged to leave my trunks, merely taking a change of linen in a carpet-bag. We shall leave to-morrow, whether it rain or snow, for it would be madness to linger any longer.

My heart is heavy at the thought of departing forever from this place. I *like* this wild and barbarous life; I leave it with regret. The solemn fir trees, "whose slender tops *are* close against the sky" here, the watching hills, and the calmly beautiful river, seem to gaze sorrowfully at me, as I stand in the moon-lighted midnight, to bid them farewell. Beloved, unconventional wood-life; divine Nature, into whose benign eyes I never looked, whose many voices, gay and glad, I never heard, in the artificial heart of the busy world,—I quit your serene teachings for a restless and troubled future. Yes, Molly, smile if you will at my folly; but I go from the mountains with a deep heart sorrow. I look kindly to this existence, which to you seems so sordid and mean. Here, at least, I have been contented. The "thistle-seed," as you call me, sent abroad its roots right lovingly into this barren soil, and gained an unwonted strength in what seemed to you such unfavorable surroundings. You would hardly recognize the feeble and half-dying invalid, who drooped languidly out of sight, as night shut down between your straining gaze and the good ship Manilla, as she wafted her far away from her Atlantic home, in the person of your *now* perfectly healthy sister.

FRANK SOULE'S WRECK.

Call Sept. 4, 1897
A Story of Another Collector's
Troubles Thirty Years Ago.

The present episode in the Revenue Office has recalled to a writer in the Los Angeles Times who knew the days of a generation ago the story of the troubles of Collector Soule, which many old-timers will recall. The Times gives the account as follows:

The death of George E. Barnes, one of the founders of the San Francisco CALL, coming simultaneously with the devaluation and suicide of Isaac Norton, cashier of the Internal Revenue Office in that City, brings to the memory of an old-time newspaper man an occurrence of over thirty years ago. The old-timer was at that time employed as an editorial writer on one of the Sacramento dailies, and while on a visit to the metropolis went up to pay a visit to Mr. Barnes, then manager of THE CALL. The chief editorial writer on that paper was Frank Soule, father of Professor Soule of the State University. The two friends sat together, chatting over commonplace subjects, when suddenly Mr. Soule entered the editorial-rooms with his handsome old face wreathed in smiles. After shaking hands with the writer he gleefully exclaimed:

"Congratulate me, George; I've struck it rich."

"And where?" asked Mr. Barnes, quietly.

"Why, the President has just appointed me as Collector of Internal Revenue for this district," said the old gentleman, in feverish ecstacy.

"I certainly would, if I thought it were a subject for congratulation, but unless I am badly mistaken you will wish yourself back at that dingy old desk there before you are through with it," said Barnes.

"You speak in riddles," said Mr. Soule; "pray let me know just exactly what you mean."

"I mean just this," replied Mr. Barnes; "you will be the Collector and you will have to give a big bond, on which your personal friends will be the sureties. You owe your appointment to Senator Conness, and his henchman, George C. Gorham, will select your deputies for you. They will do as they please and you will have to stand it. Talk about congratulations! I think this is the worst thing that could happen you."

Six years later Frank Soule, a man who never put a crooked dollar into his pocket between the day of his birth and the hour of

his death, was proclaimed a defaulter to the amount of \$70,000. His deputies and clerks had done the trick for him. Fast horses and faster women, hot birds and cold bottles had been the order of the day and the night with his deputies; and the poor old man, who never had a dishonest thought in his head, was glad to go back to a newspaper office and work for \$30 a week. Barnes' words were the utterances of a prophet.

Groping her way from room to room in an old house in Washington, a widow of 84 years of age lives merely from day to day, old, poor and blind. She is the widow of a pioneer hardware merchant of San Francisco who was one of the sureties on Mr. Soule's official bond and who had to pay \$5360 as his share of the "Irish dividend" in the case. That amount of money would come very handy to the poor old lady just now.

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